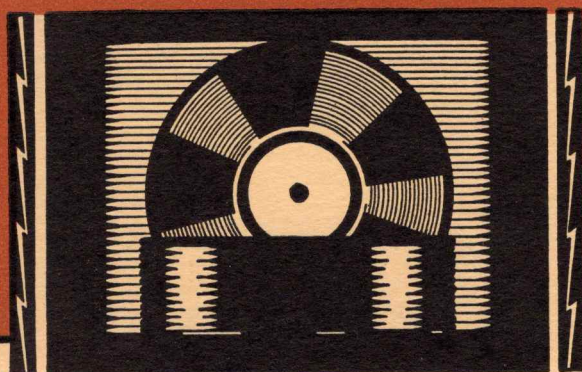


The

JANUARY, 1937

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AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



RECORDS

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EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED

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The American Music Lover

A MUSICAL CONNOISSEUR'S MAGAZINE

JANUARY

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EDITORIAL

LOOKING back over the outputs of the past year we would be inclined to term 1936 the *record* year of all times for records. So rich has been the harvest for the phonophile that we can fully appreciate those who feel uncertain where to begin their reaping. Toscanini's return to records was unquestionably the major event of the year. As magnificent as his recordings are from the interpretive standpoint and also from the reproductive side, their value still remains debatable at the present time, for few machines can satisfactorily play these highly vitalized recordings with their super-sensitive shadings and their extraordinarily loud dynamic range. The most successful of his recordings to date remains Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* with Rossini's *Overture to The Italian Woman in Algiers* running a close second. In these selections Toscanini's interpretive artistry has been faithfully recorded for posterity. In his Wagnerian album, his artistry cannot be said to be as advantageously projected. This is largely due to the fact that Toscanini's finely drawn *pianissimos*, which predominate in such works as the *Prelude to Lohengrin* and in *Siegfried's Idyll*, keep the music too much below the level of the needle tracking sound.

The advent of Nathan Milstein, Yella Peßl, and Egon Petri on records has supplied good reasons for much rejoicing among music lovers this past year. Petri has given a most notable contribution to recorded music in his splendid performance of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata in C Minor, Opus 111*. The return of Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra to records has been another outstanding event. The quality of the recordings obtained from the Boston Symphony Orchestra are, as a fact, among the best orchestral recordings in existence. And this too goes for the recordings of the Boston "Pops" under the dynamic Fiedler.

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Assistant Editors

WILLIAM KOZLENKO
PHILIP MILLER

PETER HUGH REED

Editor and Publisher

PAUL GIRARD

Circulation Manager

Contributing Editors

LAWRENCE ABBOTT
A. P. DE WEESE

The American Music Lover, General Offices: 12 East 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.
Telephone ALgonquin 4-8363

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The Editor extends seasonal felicitations for
the coming year to all readers and friends.

Some Facts About Needles

By PETER HUGH REED

THE old saying — “A chain is as strong as its weakest link” — can be fittingly applied to recorded music with the alteration of an adjective.

“Recorded music is as *good* as its weakest link,” and one of its weakest links is the needle.

With a great many people, this link is much weaker than they are aware of, because they know little about needles as they function in the reproduction of sound; the essential differences, for example, between the wooden or fibre type of needles which reproduce a minimum amount of sound, and steel or chromium needles, which reproduce the maximum amount.

I do not think I exaggerate when I say that the majority of music lovers mentally relate their needles to surface noise rather than to musical reproduction. It is a foregone conclusion that many music lovers are indifferent to the quality of tone produced, particularly in their own homes. They sanction, for example, reproduced music with booming, overstated basses — tubby, flabby, inflated low tones, which they would criticize broadly if they heard — or rather were compelled to hear them — in a public auditorium.

Music lovers select their needle because they believe it reduces surface noise and does not wear the record. They compromise unwittingly, let us say, on qualitative reproduction. An inferior or inadequate link is used to outline the best.

Now the reduction of surface noise and the preservation of the record may seem of prime importance, but the fact is most needles that actually accomplish these things form the poorest link in the recorded music chain.

From the beginning of the phonograph, and particularly for the past fifteen years, the phonophile has been interested in obtaining a needle that would pass through the record tracks with the least possible resistance

and noise. Although sound engineers discovered in the early days of the phonograph that the best reproduction was obtainable only through a hard, metallic point (Edison, the inventor of the phonograph, for example, claimed the best reproduction of sound was to be had only through a diamond, the hardest of all points), people nevertheless wanted something less durable. Besides reducing surface noise, the wish to reduce record wear also manifested itself in the phonophile. Now the instinct of the collector is naturally to preserve, and this in itself is a laudable trait, but preservation and enjoyment of a phonograph record are not both feasible. A compromise has to take place somewhere. With the true lover of music, the case could not possibly be the same as with the collector. The urge to preserve, for example, would not be adamant for him because we logically assume that he is interested in musical values, which could never be had through compromise. Hence any needle that reduced record wear to a minimum would not be his chief concern.

At this point it might be well to point out that the physical characteristics of a record prevent permanent preservation. Certain materials used in a record, shellac particularly, are the reasons for this. A record over a period of years gradually dries out and becomes more brittle as time goes on. Most record collectors have had the experience of lifting an old record from an album, a table or elsewhere and having a portion of it break off in their hand for no good reason at all. The answer is — of course — this record had dried out to such a brittle state that it could no longer withstand undue strain, even its own weight.

In the days of acoustical recording, the demands of phonophiles to eliminate surface noise resulted in the manufacture of the wooden or fibre needle, later supplemented by the cactus needle. These needles undoubtedly proved very satisfactory to many people, because they were unconcerned with

reproducing any other physical sounds than were actually in the record which was at this period of a very limited scope. Overtones or high frequencies were not important then, because they were not there; yet, even in the early days of the phonograph the wooden needle was defrauding its users of a certain amount of quality — a brilliance or brightness of tone, for example, which it could not reproduce.

Wooden needles in those days defined fairly well what was in the record, because the frequency range was largely that of the human voice, and dynamics being minimized were not a specific problem. Today, however, this is no longer the case. What most phonophiles apparently do not know is that the wooden needle is definitely limited in its reproductive range in relation to modern recordings, and therefore a poor agent of transmission.

Let us examine frequency ranges so that this reproduction of sound, and its importance in relation to modern recording can be more fully appreciated. The old fashioned recording mechanism was able fairly accurately to record sound between middle C on the piano and approximately G above high C. There was no real bass. In instrumental recordings, a low bass line was usually transposed an octave higher, and in the case of strings reinforced by a brass instrument. Overtones were recorded up to a little over 1500 cycles per second, or somewhere around a note or two above high C on the piano keyboard.

The next development came with the advent of electrical recording and the issuance of the orthophonic phonograph — still an acoustic instrument, but one which made use of the exponential principle of throat expansion in which the practice of matched impedance in horn design was carried out with the end that the bass response was more extended and more natural in reproduction from the record. Here, by the way of a six foot chamber, specially constructed, the first life-like low tones were projected. These low tones began with a fair semblance of truth around G of the bottom line of the bass clef — a gain of an octave and a half over the acoustic phonograph's reproduction. Overtones or tone fundamentals were supposed to be higher in orthophonic reproduction, but most technical experts claim that the gain here was relatively negligible.

The next development came with the dynamic loud speaker. It was supposed to re-

produce tonalities from C below the bass clef to the final C on the piano keyboard. At first, the exploitation of low tones was carried on to the sacrifice of high frequencies. The loud speaker did not give the clarified reproduction of *lows* that the orthophonic gave. Often, it was very difficult to disassociate the low tones from cabinet resonance, since clarified reproduction of lows from a dynamic speaker depended upon a large baffle, or sounding board construction about the speaker, of at least six by six feet, which had to be foregone in the construction of the average sized cabinet. Hence, the new reproduction of *lows*, although potentially greater in depth, was generally lacking in quality. Another feature was added a little later — the tone-control, a switch which permitted the listener to adjust the definition of *lows* and *highs ad libitum*. This device was more a detriment, however, to the true projection of the music than anything that the phonophile could himself control except the needle, but few people realized this; for inevitably they turned it to the lowest ebb and listened to a production of tubby, flabby bass tones — tones that frequently rumbled and wheezed like sounds emanating from a person with a heavy chest cold. *Lows* were considered of prime importance. High frequencies, which gave the brightness, the living quality to music, were not considered essential, largely because they were relatively in the minor, since the high frequency range of both recordings and radio at this time were not over 3500 cycles per second.

More recently, largely by use of the labyrinth speaker, which eliminated the necessity of the large baffle, the range of the loudspeaker has been extended to reproduce tone fundamentals up to 7200 frequencies. Although many manufacturers claim their products have this extended frequency range, it is doubtful whether any but the highest priced machines exceed 5000 frequencies in height or go below 64 in depth.

To return to the needle problems — one of the prime factors in needle wear on the record is due to the alignment of the tone-arm. On most commercial machines, because of the shortness of the tone-arm and the fact that it is fitted in a minimized space, the alignment tracking of the needle is so bad that it cannot ride in the center of the groove where it is supposed to. This out-of-alignment business has a great deal to do with the swishing sound which disturbs some phonophiles toward the end of the record. This is

largely because the needle is forced against the inner line and cannot track evenly. Another dominating factor for similar causes is due to automatic stops and record changing devices, which throw a counter resistance against that of the tone-arm, particularly toward the latter part of the record so that these devices will function when the music is finished.

The phonophile interested to obtain the best performance, to hear reproduced all the music originally cut into the grooves of the record, must use a chromium or steel needle. A wooden, cactus, or fibre needle cannot reproduce *highs*, and it seldom gives a clear definition of the *lows*, for wood absorbs and displaces tone.

The greatest drawback to the wooden variety needle is its shouldering or spreading, and the fact that, despite its being softer than the record, it can destroy the quality of the musical vibrations which are on the sides of the grooves. Steel needles naturally destroy the quality of these same vibrations also because they are more inflexible than the record material, but the actual wear of the steel needle when the tone-arm is aligned correctly is relatively less. The reason for this is the fact that the steel needle cuts its way first in the bottom of the groove. Too, it is made to fit the groove better.

The fault with cheap steel needles is they shed particles in the bottom of the groove which of course cause serious record wear and help develop a scratch. The chromium needle, because it is of a finer and more unyielding material, does not do this as badly. The chromium needle however cuts deeply into the record material, unless used in a light pick-up. It is not well to use this type of needle in a heavy pick-up, for the degeneration of the record — particularly in the modern *higher-fidelity* recordings — will be considerable in a very short time. The best metallic needle for heavy pick-ups, in our estimation, is the English Edison-Bell needle.

Many phonophiles are still unaware that there are steel needles manufactured today that reproduce a minimum amount of surface noise at the same time that they reproduce fully the sound engraved in the record grooves. I refer to the shadow-graph

needles, which are used in connection with all sound reproduction in theatres and in radio. These needles are harder than ordinary steel and are especially designed to fit the record groove, and each one is individually inspected for perfection. Since one needle is designed to play a fifteen minute transcription, it is possible to use one approximately four times in the playing of twelve inch discs recorded at 78 revolutions to the minute. Care must be taken however not to disturb the position of the needle in the pick-up and in placing it lightly on the face of the record. A new record will wear any needle more quickly than a record that has been played several times. The reason for this has been attributed to various causes: an excess of both the abrasive and the shellac used in the manufacture of the record, which has to be removed by the needle to obtain clear musical definition. In playing recordings for the first time with any type of needle, it is best to use them only once: unless one uses a chromium needle. The reviewers on *The American Music Lover* have discovered that the chromium needle is the best for playing records for the first time, particularly Columbia records in order to get the clearest and most accurate rendition. With a light pick-up a chromium needle can be used fairly safely about thirty to forty times.

It is well to state at this time that with a light pick-up a hard needle is absolutely demanded for the best results. If one wishes to have a clear, vital reproduction — a reproduction that has the living quality to it, with the overtones of the music fully realized — one must perforce use a metallic needle. Fibre or wooden needles act like an acoustical filter, particularly where the *highs* are concerned.

The needle problem is definitely a personal one, and has to be worked out individually. The various companies manufacture needles which they find satisfactory with their own products. Columbia for example, manufactures *only* a chromium needle because they claim it gives best results in playing their recordings. Victor also makes a chromium needle and a shadow-graph needle, which they advocate in the use with their own recordings. Other companies which specialize in the manufacture of cheap discs, also market several types of steel needles; the use of these should be avoided.

The Centenary of A Neglected Composer: John Field

By DAVID EWEN

A HUNDRED years ago, one of the significant composers for the piano-forte died; and musical history has few examples of composers of his importance who have suffered eclipse for so long a time. At best, John Field is today remembered as a remarkable virtuoso pianist who exerted some influence as a teacher. The musical historian will likewise refer to him, in passing, as the creator of the "Nocturne", a form which he first brought into being and bequeathed to Chopin.

Yet, John Field was much more than this, as even a cursory examination of his music will reveal. In his piano music, he has anticipated the pulse and heart-beat of Chopin. Chopin's enchanting chromaticism, Chopin's full and warm romantic singing, Chopin's remarkable elasticity of form can all be found in John Field's piano music. Field was, probably, the first of the Romantic composers for the piano, and his influence upon the development of piano-music was inestimable. Yet, it is not because of his historic significance that I would honor Field on the centenary of his death, but more especially because in his own right he was a composer of importance. At his best, he possessed a personal speech that combined tenderness and melancholy, sweetness and pain, expressed in accents of unforgettable beauty.

John Field was born on July 23, 1782 in Dublin, Ireland. His talent for music asserted itself early, and his father — a violinist in a Dublin theatre — arranged for instruction upon the piano. Unfortunately, John Field's grandfather—no doubt, inspired with visions of a magnificent concert-career for his grandson — decided to superintend these studies personally. With a ruthless hand that was not reluctant to inflict heavy blows of punishment, the grandfather supervised over John Field's piano studies. Every slip of the finger was severely punished. In this way, John Field was officially introduced to music; and it is fortunate, indeed, that his enthusiasm

for music was so great that not even severe blows or iron discipline could smother it.

Field, however, was soon freed from his grandfather's pernicious tyranny, and was placed under Tommaso, a well-known piano teacher in Dublin. Tommaso's sympathetic understanding and warm affection — striking contrasts to what Field had previously experienced! — inspired new enthusiasm and zeal in Field, and he now made gargantuan progress. In his tenth year, he was able to make his first public appearance as a soloist at the Spiritual Concerts in Dublin, directed by Giordani. This appearance elicited such enthusiasm that two more concerts followed; and at one of these, Field introduced a first fruit, a Rondo.

In his twelfth year, John Field — the proud possessor of an enviable reputation as a child prodigy — was brought to London by his father, who had been engaged for the orchestra in the Haymarket Theatre. While here, his father contacted Clementi, the well known pianist who had now turned to the manufacture of pianos. Clementi was deeply interested in young Field and offered to give him regular instruction if, in return, he would become his apprentice and work in the warehouse. It was a fair exchange, and Field profited immeasurably from the valuable advice which Clementi gave him. In his first appearances as pianist in London, in the Spring of 1794, Field revealed a growing maturity, and before long he enjoyed a formidable reputation as virtuoso. And not only as a virtuoso — for, in 1799, John Field introduced his *First Piano Concerto* at the Pinto Concerts, and its fluidity of musical writing as well as the warm emotion of its content aroused considerable admiration and praise.

Notwithstanding Field's mounting prestige both as a pianist and composer, he remained an apprentice of Clementi for many years, and a close bond of friendship developed between teacher and pupil. Clementi was only too well aware of Field's extraordinary musi-

cal gifts, and was prepared at all times to give him assistance in furthering his artistic career. In 1801, Clementi furnished the funds for the publication of Field's *Three Sonatas*, the first of Field's works to emerge from the presses. One year later, he accompanied his protégé on an extensive concert tour which brought them to Paris, Vienna and as far as Russia; and wherever Field performed, he was greeted with acclaim and adoration.

When, early in 1803, Clementi made preparations to return from Russia to England, Field decided that he would settle permanently in St. Petersburg. Russia appealed strongly to him, and he had already established himself in the eyes of the Russians as one of the most celebrated pianists of the time. As Glinka, the great Russian nationalist composer who became Field's pupil in 1814, wrote in later life: "Field's playing was at once sweet and strong and characterized by admirable precision. His fingers fell on the keys as large drops of rain that spread themselves like iridescent pearls."

With permanent residence in St. Petersburg, Field's prestige as a musician soared and swelled. His name became something of a household word, and to become his pupil was the highest aspiration of every young music-student of high society. Inevitably, Field amassed a formidable fortune, and innumerable honors beat a path to his door.

Unfortunately, wealth and fame became Field's artistic ruin. In the early years of his Russian sojourn, he composed works like the *Piano Quintet* and a new piano concerto which revealed indisputably his growing powers and strength as a creator in larger musical forms. However, with soft living came indolence, and a stifling reluctance to assume any work whatsoever. In 1808, Field married a French actress, Mlle. Percheron, and their marriage was unhappy from the very first; they were separated in 1813.

In 1814, Field composed the first of his *Nocturnes*, the first time the name appears on a musical composition, the forerunner of form which Chopin brought to such heights of immortality. It would, however, be a sad understatement to speak of Field's *Nocturnes* as merely the forerunners of those of Chopin. In his most felicitous expressions in this form — the *Fourth Nocturne in A major* is a neat case in point — he has achieved Chopinesque delicacy, poignancy and tenderness with unerring fingers. As Franz Liszt wrote of Field's *Nocturnes*: "Their tones, already, transport us into those hours when the soul, freed from the burden of the day and resting

only in itself, soars upward to the mysterious regions of the starry heights."

In 1822, Field changed his home from St. Petersburg to Moscow, where more than ever he became a victim to indolence. He had already taken to drink, and his life was more and more becoming wasted with idleness and dissipation. Composition became a rare occupation, and he now began to neglect his piano-playing and teaching appointments. Such life not only brought disintegration to Field's spirit and creative powers but to his



JOHN FIELD

wealth as well. It was not long before both poverty and ill-health faced him.

In 1832 — his life had by his time become empty and sordid — Field, in attempt to arouse himself from his squalor, returned to London after thirty years of absence. He was given a welcome accorded kings. His performance of his own *Concerto in E flat*, at the concerts of the Royal Philharmonic, was the subject for wild enthusiasms. These triumphs succeeded in partially restoring the dignity and self-respect which he had so completely lost.

One month after his return to London, Field's friend, teacher and guide — Muzio Clementi — passed away, and Field was one

of his chief mourners at the funeral services at Westminster Abbey.

Following his London triumph, Field began an extensive concert tour through Europe. In Paris, he had an opportunity of hearing Chopin for the first time, and it cannot be said that Field recognized Chopin's genius. From Paris he went to Brussels, then to Switzerland and Italy. It was a march of triumph, and it seemed that Field was on the road towards a new and even greater career as a musician. However, his earlier follies left their irremovable fingerprints: on May of 1834, he fell seriously ill in Naples. He was brought to a hospital for a serious operation and for many months he hovered between life and death. When, finally, recovery enabled him to leave the hospital, he was penniless. It was fortunate, indeed, that he now came into contact with a Russian family, whom he had known in St. Petersburg, and who took him with them for a rest-cure in Ischia.

But his health was completely disintegrated. A few more concerts in Vienna, and Field returned to Moscow — an artist broken in spirit and physique. On November of 1836, he was once again confined to his bed. And on January 11th of 1837, John Field passed away.

His principal compositions include seven Concertos for Piano and Orchestra, many Sonatas for Piano, the Nocturnes, a Piano Quintet and miscellaneous pieces for the piano. This to be sure is not a prolific output, but it maintains a high level of artistic excellence throughout. Field always possessed an instinctive feeling for form, a feeling for poetry which he could express in melodies of unforgettable beauty, good-taste and refinement. Had he avoided the temptations that accompanied wealth and devoted himself to a life of disciplined creativeness, he might have grown and developed into an immortal; certainly the seeds of genius are fertilized in all of his works. As it is, he is the composer of some beautiful pages which should not be neglected. One might hesitate to say with that distinguished German critic, Rellstab, that Field's *Nocturnes* are on a higher artistic level than Chopin's, but one cannot deny — after an acquaintance with them — that they deserve a place beside them. John Field has, too long a time, suffered an obscurity he does not deserve. On this, the centenary of his death, it would be appropriate for pianists and piano students to turn to Fields' music and rediscover a wealth of beauty which, for so long a time, they have left untouched.

Overtones

A Moussorgsky Symphony

STOKOWSKI and the Philadelphia Orchestra have recently been busy in the recording studios. Rumor has it that he recorded the symphonic synthesis that he devised this past year from Moussorgsky's original score of *Boris Godounow*. When this work was presented in Philadelphia and New York this past Fall, the critics were loud in their praise of it. Said Lawrence Gilman of the New York Herald-Tribune — "Mr. Stokowski has spun most skillfully his multi-colored symphonic web. He has let Moussorgsky speak for himself in his orchestration whenever that was possible with justice to Moussorgsky; whenever it was not possible, the help that he has given has been admirably tactful, sensitive, imaginative . . . The music of *Boris* has never before in New York come so vividly and puissantly into being." An outstanding event in the concert hall — this work should likewise prove an outstanding event on records.

New Chamber Music Recording

Among recent chamber music works recorded in Europe, two recordings, made by the Rome Quartet of old music, prove highly interesting. On HMV DB 4447-48-49, this worthy Italian ensemble play a string quartet by Giovanni Guiseppe Cambini (1746-1825), a pupil of Padre Martini. And on HMV discs DB 4441-42, they play Respighi's string quartet arrangement of *Old Italian Airs and Dances for the Lute*.

A Beethoven Quintet

It is good to see in the English lists a recording by the Lener String Quartet with William Primrose (viola) of Beethoven's *String Quintet in C major, Opus 29*. This music, often referred to as *The Storm Quintet* — has many attractive features — notably among which are the tunefulness of its themes. In a recent concert of *The Friends of Music* in New York City, this work stirred the interest of music lovers considerably.

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The Importance of Gabriel Fauré

By PHILIP MILLER

(Continued from November Issue)

FAURE'S preference for nondescript titles is perhaps responsible for his neglect by pianists. The musical public has always been prone to snatch at any program available for a work. Publishers, understanding this, have affixed titles to the various works of Chopin and Mendelssohn, as well as to certain of the *Sonatas* of Beethoven. Indeed they have not been above inventing stories about the composition of famous works — which accounts for the popularity of more than one piece of absolute music. Debussy named his *Préludes* with great imagination (after they were written) but Fauré composed merely *Barcarolles*, *Nocturnes*, *Valse-caprices* and the like. These have called forth great praise from many authorities (including Alfred Cortot, though he has not yet seen fit to record them) and an inspection of the scores will prove that these works deserve a place in the pianist's repertoire. So pianistic are they that it is difficult to believe that Fauré was not himself a brilliant pianist. He did not like to play, and did so only in chamber music, as accompanist, or in four and eight hand music. According to Cortot the finest of the piano works are the *Sixth Nocturne* and the *Theme and Variations*, Opus 73.

There are a number of available recordings of the piano pieces, though they were all made in France and are not easy to procure in this country. They include the *Second Barcarolle*, played by Jean Doyen (Ultra-phoné FP-1441); the *Sixth Barcarolle*, by Carmen Guilbert (Pathé X-98135); *Impromptus*, Nos. 2 and 5 by Marguerite Long (Columbia LF-126) and No. 3 by Léon Kartun (Odeon 171095); the *Fourth Nocturne* by Emma Boynet (Pathe PG-2); and, most recent of all, the *Fifth Prélude* and *Fifth Impromptu*, played by Robert Casadesus on Columbia LFX-401. I should like to call attention also to the splendid recording of the *Impromptu* for harp played by Lily Laskine on HMV L-993. The work, in another version figures as No. 6 of the piano *Impromptus*.

Mention should also be made of the very charming children's suite for piano duo — *Dolly*, Opus 56 — which has been recorded in just the proper spirit by two youthful pupils of Marguerite Long (Columbia 9103M and 4120M).

As a composer of chamber music he would rank high if he had given us only the first *Violin Sonata*, Op. 13, with its wonderfully youthful opening theme. Let those who are reminded of César Franck remember that this music is ten years older than Franck's *Sonata*. "There is no sonata which is less dogmatic," says Jean-Aubry. "From this point of view it can be compared only to those of Grieg, but Fauré's is French, and does us much belated honor. There is no sonata that is less a sonata in the sense insisted upon by the gentlemen of the gauge and ruler. One might take it for a divertissement, a phantasy. It has not the pretention, like some others, of containing a treatise of metaphysics, or the solution of the social problem. It is simply music. That is a miracle which is far from happening to all sonatas." The first *Sonata* has been twice recorded. The Cortot-Thibaud version for Victor, though stunningly played, is now mechanically outdated, and has been withdrawn from the catalogue. Denise Soriano and Magda Tagliafero won the Candide Grand Prix for Pathé in 1934 with their recording of the work (PAT 3-5).

The miracle happens again in the *First Quartet* for piano and strings, Op. 15. This very Schumannesque work, with its richly romantic first movement which nearly transcends its medium, and its consoling *Adagio* in alternate threes and twos, is available in a superb Columbia recording by Robert Casadesus and members of the Calvert Quartet (Set 255). This performance is definitely to be preferred to the HMV version.

The second *Piano Quartet*, Op. 45, was written eight years later. It is so similar in style to the first that it has never achieved

a like success. The *String Quartet*, Op. 121, dating from the composer's last days, is recognizably the work of an older man. Though the old mastery is still apparent, the vitality and freshness of the earlier chamber works are lacking. There is, nevertheless, much to admire and love in the first movement and in the soaring melody of the *Andante*. The Krettly Quartet, who were the first to play the *Quartet*, have recorded it for French Columbia (D-15218 - 15220).

But let us pass on to the *Requiem*. That noble and serenely moving composition was inspired by the death of the composer's father in 1887, and bears the opus number 48. In it we find a fusion of the medieval and the modern: "the ancient spirit mingling the idea of voluptuousness with that of death," as Camille Benoit has put it. This *Requiem* is not a dramatic work — it stands at opposite poles with that of Verdi. It is a *Requiem* without *Dies irae* — perhaps this fact alone sums up its character. It may be taken as a key to the spirit of the man who wrote it — so completely sincere, so tranquil and yet so deeply felt it is. It is the creed of one not afraid of death, of one who really believes in the beneficence of God. It is not, however, all sunshine. There is an element of unrest in the opening chord as the chorus enters — an effect achieved by the double third. This same feeling is noticeable again in the *Pie Jesu*, a solo for soprano with an unforgettable melody. Once more in the agitated introduction to the *Agnus Dei*, and in the rather more dramatic *Libera*, we feel that all is not peace. The predominant note, however, is one of calm repose — an impression born out in the quiet close. It would be pleasant to be able to praise wholeheartedly the Victor recording of the *Requiem*, but the set shows its age rather badly. There are, however, imposing spots, notably the *Pie Jesu*, in the haunting voice of Mme. Malnory-Marceillac. The choral work is for the most part good, though the French pronunciation of the Latin words falls rather strangely on American ears.

We have still to consider Fauré as a composer for the stage. There are four chief works in which he tried his hand at dramatic music — the operas *Prométhée* and *Penélope*, and the incidental music for Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Harancourt's *Shylock*. We in this country have not had an opportunity to hear the operas, and the *Pelléas* music is familiar only as an orchestral suite. *Shylock* has come to us only on a few records. This is unfortunate, as the works

have been highly admired. A glance at the score of *Penélope* will satisfy any musician that the opera is not to be lightly dismissed. Fauré's ideals were those which we have come to accept as the true basis of lyric drama — they are the same principles which inspired Monteverdi, Gluck, Mozart and Wagner. The libretto is, of course, blamed for the alleged lack of dramatic force. This is not an opera calculated to delight the standees, but let us hope for a chance to hear it. There are recorded selections on Odeon 188619 and 123590.

The *Pelléas* music was written for an English production of the play in 1898, starring Mrs. Patrick Campbell. The music, thus, is four years older than the Debussy opera. The orchestration is the work of Fauré's pupil, Charles Koechlin. The finest movements are the *Introduction* with its old-time atmosphere, and the final *Molto adagio* depicting the flight of Melisande's soul. Three movements of the suite arranged from this music have been recorded by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, led by Albert Wolff (Brunswick 90147-9). The absence of the *Molto adagio* is to be deplored, especially as the odd side is given over to Ravel's well-known *Pavane pour une enfante défunte* — which, however, serves to demonstrate Ravel's indebtedness to his master.

It is good news that a Fauré Society is being formed in France for the purpose of making his works more widely known. There are to be competitions in the interpretation of his works, and the winners are to give Fauré concerts and to make records.

"Fauré's work," writes Emil Vuillermoz, "is the key that unlocks all the doors of modern music. Let us beware of losing this precious talisman. One must at all costs resist the wave of prosaicism that has been submerging the memory of Gabriel Fauré . . ." Again, "Here is a man who is simple, shy, without ambition and upon whom honors fall spontaneously, with an extraordinary persistency. Here is a man who ought to know well enough that one can do nothing big in our modern society without publicity and without money, and who, without money and without publicity has performed whatever miracles he chose." Perhaps the most striking features of his music are the simplicity and naturalness which were born of his own character. He is a great melodist, a subtle harmonist, able to establish a mood

(Continued on Page 292)

The Library Shelf

Tovey's "Concertos" and Two Piano Collections

CONCERTOS, by Sir Donald Tovey. Published, 1936, by Oxford University Press. Price \$4.00.

AFTER a careful reading of this volume on *Concertos*, one can easily begin his review with an encomium and say that: There are few men in the musical profession who can compare with Tovey in his ability to write succinctly of music, treat it as an art and science, and be, at the same time, alive to many other relative factors in life and art. Sir Donald, who is a remarkable man in many ways, has never yet betrayed his trust as an artist, a musical scientist, a composer, a scholar and a gentleman. He possesses that rare combination of seriousness and humor, irony and whimsy, skepticism and faith; all of which, when combined with penetrating scholarship, make his critical writings delightful to read and interesting to ponder over.

The latest of his series on music, *Concertos*, which is the third volume (there are more coming) issued to date by the Oxford University Press, is like the two previous ones (*Symphonies*), replete with valuable data concerning all the singular concertos from Mozart and Beethoven to many contemporary composers. (I must point out, however, that the reader will seek in vain for analyses of such important works as the *Violin Concertos* by Goldmark and Dvorak, of which there is no mention, as well as the Prokofieff and Stravinsky *Violin Concertos*, though Tovey devotes considerable space to such comparatively unknown works in America as Joachim's *Hungarian Concerto* and Somervall's *Violin and Oboe Concertos*. This would signify, simply, that the former works have never perhaps been performed under his direction — for he is also a conductor and a program-annotator — whilst the latter works have been done.)

The absence of all salient violin concertos — the book does not after all purport to be encyclopediac — should not detract from its genuine value as music criticism. It has been

said that Tovey is perhaps the most frequently quoted music-critic, and, after a perusal of this volume, one can understand why.

Among many other data, an interesting bit of information regarding the Haydn *Cello Concerto* is revealed in the addendum. We learn, much to our astonishment, that Haydn never wrote this famous Concerto and that it is in fact a work composed by his friend and pupil Anton Kraft, whose name is often associated with it. History tells us that Haydn wrote the work for Kraft, who was a superlative cellist, when, in truth, it was Kraft himself who composed it. This is a startling, albeit gratifying bit of information, for we shall hereafter be compelled to revise our estimate of Herr Kraft as a composer. From now on when we speak of Haydn's *Cello Concerto* will be constrained to supplement this notice with a verbal parenthesis to the effect that it was Kraft and not Haydn who wrote it.

I can go on at length pointing out the many brilliant virtues inherent in this book, but by doing this, I will be repeating what will be apparent to the reader who studies this volume on *Concertos*. The price of the book, though rather high, is well worth it, for Tovey's book can easily replace four volumes, marked at twice the amount, on your shelf.

—William Kozlenko.

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THE PIANIST'S MUSIC SHELF: *The Days of Brahms and Saint-Saëns*, Volume Five, and *The Days of Grieg and Tschaikowsky*, Volume Six. Edited by Albert E. Wier. Harcourt, Brace and Company. New York. Price \$2.50 each volume.

THE fifth volume of *The Pianist's Music Shelf*, edited by Dr. Albert Wier, presents works of composers born in the period from 1830 to 1838. Twenty-seven composers are represented, and forty-five compositions are included in the volume, which numbers 192 pages.

The sixth volume on the other hand, presents works of composers born in the period from 1840 to 1849. Here twenty-six composers are accounted for, not twenty-seven as marked on the cover for Boito is forgotten inside, and fifty-three compositions are included in the collection, which numbers 206 pages.

As in the earlier series, these two volumes are carefully prepared and edited, printed in dark green ink with evenly spaced notes that are easy on the eyes, and with a brief historical note and a small picture of the composer at the head of each composition.

Volume five gives us original piano pieces by Balakirew, Bendel, Brahms, Bruch, Bülow, Cui, Dubois, Durand, Leschetizky, Nápravník, Navrátil, Rheinberger, Rubinstein, Saint-Saëns, Södermann, Waldteufel and Wilm. It also gives us arrangements of various instrumental compositions by Bizet, Borodin, Delibes, Goldmark, Moussorgsky, and Ponchielli. Brahms' *Waltzes*, Opus 39 are included in their entirety and two *Hungarian Dances*—No. 1 and No. 5, besides several other compositions and his well-known arrangement of the Gluck *Gavotte*.

Volume six has fewer arrangements and more original material for the piano. Massenet, Rimsky-Korsakow, Tchaikowsky, Dvorak, and Grieg are represented by arrangements, although the last three are also represented by many original piano compositions. Among the other composers listed are Alpheraky, Bohm, Brassin, Brüll, Fauré, Scharwenka, Sgambati, Svendsen, Tausig and MacKenzie. (We are grateful to the Editor for including a representative example of MacKenzie's music, as this English "Brahms" has been unduly neglected in almost every piano anthology.)

Dr. Wier is to be commended on his choice of material in his fine series of music for the piano, for he has avoided the overly-familiar and given us instead many less frequently heard selections. Naturally, in the case of the more famous men, he has included familiar works, because the music lover or student purchasing these books would expect to find such compositions represented.

The volumes that make up *The Pianist's Music Shelf* serve a double purpose: they can be used for study or for recreation. In them Dr. Wier has omitted fingering, because he feels that this is the exclusive prerogative of the music teacher; but in all other respects the essential markings of the music are included.

Each of the volumes of *The Pianist's Music Shelf* as it comes along tends to prove that the editor has the interest of the true music lover at heart, and that when the whole series is completed, he will have assembled an unusual collection of piano music.

—Peter Hugh Reed

The Importance of Fauré

(Continued from Page 290)

with the very first note of a composition and to sustain it to the end. He is a master of economy and understatement: he never wearies us with repetition or extension — always leaves us wanting more.

Oscar Wilde once said that when an artist ceases to create for his own pleasure and strives to please his public he ceases to be an artist. Fauré was always the artist — the amateur, to use the word in its original sense. And as an artist and an amateur he finds himself in company with such men as Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Franz, Wolf and Delius — all of whom wrote primarily to please themselves. Can anyone question the fact that no truly great work can exist which fails to convince its creator?

OVERTONES

(Continued from Page 288)

New Chamber Music

Chamber music enthusiasts will be delighted to know that Adolf Busch and his Chamber Orchestra have been making more recordings of Bach. This time, under the HMV label (Victor in this country), Busch has made the Bach *Suites*, or *Overtures*, in *C major* and in *B minor*. Each work occupies three 12-inch discs.

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The first recordings of the Handel *Concerti Grossi* (Nos. 1, 2 and 3) have been issued in English by English Decca. They are played by Boyd Neel and his String Orchestra. The advisability of obtaining these recordings in the original English pressing cannot be stressed too greatly here, since our experience with the repressings of all works made by the Boyd Neel String Orchestra has been anything but satisfactory. After all, a

string ensemble should not be hampered by excessive surface noise.

New Symphonic Recordings

New symphonic recordings issued in England recently include a London Philharmonic recording of the *Overture to Die Meistersinger* conducted by Beecham; a Paris Conservatoire Orchestra recording of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony* conducted by Philippe Gaubert (five discs); a Berlin Philharmonic recording of the *Overture to Der Freischütz* (3 sides) and *Intermezzo, Act 3*, same opera, conducted by Furtwängler, and a Vienna Philharmonic recording of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* conducted by Bruno Walter.

Of further interest is the recording made by Menuhin and the Paris Symphony Orchestra, direction of Georges Enesco, of Mozart's *Third Violin Concerto in G major* (K-216) — HMV discs 2729-30-31.

Strauss In England

One of the major events of the Autumn season in London seems to have been the two week visit of the Dresden Opera to Covent Garden. The opening night performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* was a sensational success. Says Edwin Evans in *The Chesterian* — "We have had wonderful casts in *Der Rosenkavalier* but rarely such a good presentation of that exacting work, and the audience was quick to appreciate the difference." The first week of the opera was virtually a Strauss week in London. "He is the man of the musical moment," declares Mr. Evans, surely an interesting and provocative statement in these times, since it has been a popular pastime in recent years to underestimate Strauss. But perhaps Mr. Evans does not mean it to be taken as a broad statement.

Music and Football

Perhaps you've heard this one before. Believe it or not, it actually happened to a friend. It appears the friend went to visit friends — a husband and wife — who were bridge addicts. During the course of the evening while playing bridge, the wife — to her husband's annoyance persisted in playing the radio. It seems that she was very fond of music while he was very fond of sports. The broadcasts she chose were all musical ones, all of which disturbed the husband's concentration on the game. After pro-

testing several times to no avail, he tried drowning his chagrin in whiskies and soda. Midway in the evening, a broadcast of the Philadelphia Symphony with Stokowski conducting took place. The wife immediately turned the radio higher, and proceeded to give more attention to the broadcast than to her game. At the end of the program, the spokesman for the orchestra is said to have announced that "next week Mr. Stokowski would be in Princeton." Whereupon the husband resentfully remarked — "and I'll bet ten to one Princeton beats him."

Vaughan Williams, Public Enemy No. 3

We quote, verbatim, with one comment, from an anonymous letter, postmarked Cardiff, Wales:

"To D. Vaughan Williams *re composition*
JOB

It is nothing short of utter blasphemy setting "at nought" — a dance at the dealings of THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY with men ! ! ! !

How dare you make a mockery of HOLY WRIT — the WORD of the MOST HIGH GOD.

It is the work of the devil — no wonder the country is in such a state.

You are a disgrace to the music profession — dragging down, instead of uplifting."

To which we add but one word: *Selah!*

A Soprano Returns

Mary Lewis, the American soprano, who retired from the concert and operatic stage some years ago, is again actively engaged in singing before the public. Miss Lewis, who possesses one of the finest soprano voices in America, is now singing in a New York night club, where she is permitted to present a varied program quite unlike that of any other singer in a similar place. And because of the beauty of her voice as well as its unusual height she is proving to be a definite drawing card for the club. In our estimation, opera lost a fine singer when it lost Miss Lewis.

We are given to understand that Victor have engaged Miss Lewis to sing a long series of recordings for them, and that she has already made over twenty selections. Her recorded repertoire is to be a widely diversified one.

Record Notes and Reviews

Reviewers in this Issue: A. P. De Weese, Paul Girard, William Kozlenko,

Philip Miller, Peter Hugh Reed, and Jerome D. Bohm,

of The New York Herald-Tribune

ORCHESTRAL

BEETHOVEN: *Leonore Overture No. 3* (3 parts) and *Ruins of Athens, Overture*; played by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Bruno Walter. Victor discs 11958-58, price \$3.00.

BEETHOVEN wrote four overtures in all for his opera *Fidelio*, which was founded upon a French tale called *Leonore*. The *Leonore Overture No. 3* was really the second to be written. It was perhaps one of the wisest things that Beethoven did when he supplanted it with another overture, for in this masterpiece he gives us "less an overture to a music-drama than the music-drama itself," as Richard Wagner has declared. As a fact, this overture is a veritable tone-poem, and it is as such that most of us think of it today.

Walter gives a noble reading of this work, one which will delight all admirers of this impressive music. The vitality of this performance is considerably aided by the acoustic qualities of the hall in which the Vienna Philharmonic play. One recalls Mengelberg's fine reading of this work with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, long regarded as the best on records. It too had unusually fine acoustic qualities — a sort of a third dimensional effect. Walter is not so incisive, nor so deliberate as Mengelberg, but he is nonetheless vital. He naturally benefits from the increase in "highs" and in dynamic range in modern recording, and therefore comes off better than the noted Dutchman in the end. His opening is dignified despite the fact that it is not a true *Adagio* and that he puts in an unessential ritard before the opening *Allegro*. The pacing of the latter, however, is equitable, and the various effects in the work — the trumpet calls and the propulsive sweep and rush of the finale — are splendidly achieved.

Beethoven wrote his incidental music to Kotzebue's play — *The Ruins of Athens* in

1811. The value of this music is not very great. The overture, like the *King Stephen Overture*, as Bekker says, "shows Beethoven's hand clearly enough, but small trace of his spirit." It makes an authentic fill-in for an odd-side recording, however, and since odd-sides are more or less neglected it will probably not be resented here.

—P. H. R.

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BIZET. *Prelude, Minuet, and Adagietto* from *L' Arlésienne Suite No. 1*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia set X-69, two discs, price \$3.00.

FROM the 27 musical selections which

Bizet wrote for Daudet's play *L' Arlésienne*, first presented in Paris in 1872, eight numbers were arranged in suites of four pieces each by the composer. The selections listed above, with a fourth termed *Carillon*, form the *First Suite*. The music is charming and needs no introduction to music lovers. The play, at first a failure, has since been revived in Paris with varying degrees of success. There is no question that Bizet's music contributes to that success, for it expresses the tender and passionate emotions of the melodramatic, pastoral story with melodic simplicity. The *Prelude* opens with the tune of an old Provencal Christmas song, and then "prefigures two of the chief dramatic personages," contrasting characters (brothers in the play), one an innocent and a half-wit, and the other an impassioned lover, and man of the world. The *Adagietto* in the play accompanies the meeting of two old lovers who have been parted for a half century. Its tenderness is beautifully outlined here without sentimental stress.

To say that Beecham breathes new life into this music is but to repeat ourselves. The

refinement of the orchestra's playing under his direction is uncanny. He accentuates the music's charm by deft phrasing and tonal nuances. His playing of the *Minuet* is virtuoso artistry in its best sense, and the quiet beauty of the *Adagietto* under his treatment is momentarily spellbinding. It is this feeling that assuages our regret that Beecham did not record the fourth number, for the mood he creates in the *Adagietto* seems so perfect that one does not wish immediately to destroy it. Perhaps Beecham too feels this way.

The recording here is excellent, judged from present day standards — and is not too highly amplified. Perhaps the *pianissimo* in the *Adagietto* could have been stressed more, yet had it been placed below the level of the needle sound the mood that Beecham creates might not have been as completely realized.

—P. H. R.

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BRAHMS: *Hungarian Dances: No. 18, in D major; No. 19, in B minor; No. 20, in E minor; No. 21, in E minor*; played by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, direction of Eugene Ormandy. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 1796, price \$1.50.

WHILE a young man, Brahms made a short and disillusioning concert tour as accompanist to the Hungarian violinist, Remenyi. This brief association is said to have been the beginning of the composer's interest in gypsy music, which was later to bear such fruit as the *Hungarian dances*, and the final movements of the *Violin Concerto* and the *Double Concerto*. The first set of dances appeared in 1869, and won an immediate and lasting popularity. In them Brahms utilized a number of genuine folk tunes, as well as a good deal of original material, modestly claiming on the title page to have "arranged" the *Dances*. In the second set, of 1880, from which the four on this disc are taken, he drew more on his own inspiration, and so these pieces are, as Geiringer puts it, "a little more Brahmsian than Hungarian. Is it astonishing," he goes on, "that this series achieved less popularity than the first?"

Both sets of *Hungarian Dances* were, of course, written for two pianos — which is a suggestion for recording piano teams — and Brahms himself orchestrated only a few. However, the Dvorak arrangements are done in the right spirit and with great skill. With the recent recordings of his own *Slavonic*

Dances, such discs as the present take on an added interest.

With a goodly number of the *Hungarian Dances* still unrecorded in any form, it is a little depressing to note that three of the four on this disc duplicate another Victor record made by Adrian Boult and the B. B. C. Orchestra. Ormandy, a Hungarian by birth, of course is particularly at home in this kind of music, and this recording is a fine one, but few Brahmsians will be willing to sacrifice the *Tragic Overture*, which carries the Boult versions, or to invest in a new record which is three-quarters duplication.

—P. M.

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CHERUBINI: *Medea Overture*; played by the Milan Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia record, No. 68779-D, price \$1.50.

CHERUBINI was one of Beethoven's most famous contemporaries. Though Italian by birth, he spent a great part of his life in France, and exerted, by devious means, a powerful influence on many composers. The present work by Cherubini possesses only historical interest. It is a solid piece of music, not devoid of musical value, but certainly a lesser example of Cherubini's extraordinary musicianship.

The playing is somewhat dull, due to its having been recorded four or five years ago, and re-issued at this time. Molajoli and the Milan Symphony Orchestra, as usual, acquit themselves in a good manner, though, as stated above, the dated recording does much to hamper what brilliance would have emerged had they recorded the piece under better and more modern mechanical conditions.

—W. K.

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GERVAISE: *Six danses de la Renaissance (XVI century)*; 1. *Branle de Bourgogne*; 2. *Branle de Poitou*; 3. *Branle de Champagne*; 4. *Gaillarde*; 5. *Branle double*; 6. *Branle gai* (revised and adapted by Rosario Scalero); played by the Curtis Chamber Music Ensemble, direction of Louis Bailly. Victor ten-inch disc, No. 1797, price \$1.50.

ONE of the features of the first volume of Curt Sachs' *Anthologie Sonore* is a set of dances from the 16th century collections of Claude Gervaise, played on a group of

viols. Here we have another selection made from the same sources, but this time performed by a modern chamber orchestra. These dances have been arranged by Rosario Scalero, who is at the head of the composition department at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where this record was made.

Claude Gervaise was a viol player in the chamber music of Francis I of France, and wrote six books of dances. With the exception of the one *Gaillarde*, the pieces in this set are all varieties of the *Branle*, or *Brawl*, a round dance very popular at that time.

Besides the *Anthologie* record referred to above, one thinks immediately of the *Capriol Suite* of Peter Warlock, (English Decca K. 576) and a comparison of treatment is most interesting. Warlock had the good fortune to find at least one tune which rises high above the charming level maintained in Scalero's set of dances. I refer, of course, to the *Pavane* — which was used with such fine effect as background music in the Hollywood *Romeo and Juliet*. And his approach to the music is freer, more modern. In keeping with this, the conductor, Anthony Bernard, and his London Chamber Orchestra, present a more plastic and pulsating performance of the music. Bailly gives us good straight playing, with a preponderance of echo effects rather than the gradations of modern playing. His conception, then lies about midway between Bernard and the performers on the *Anthologie* disc.

Warlock, we might say, is like a modern novelist writing a period story, while Scalero has endeavored to capture the idiom of the time and incorporate it in his style. The Sachs recording is like a description of the period written by a sixteenth century author.

The Curtis Chamber Ensemble plays well, as we all know, and Dr. Bailly, who for so long played viola in the Flonzaley Quartet, again proves himself an able leader. The recording, too, is excellent. One wonders, however, why, after a recent debut in the cheaper red-seal classification, this student body is suddenly elevated to the higher brackets. The question is a serious one to the impecunious music lover, and, excellent as the orchestra undeniably is, there will be some who will hesitate to pay the top price for the work of musical undergraduates.

—P. M.

IBERT: *Divertissement*, played by the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, under the direction of Arthur Fiedler. Two twelve-inch Victor discs, No. 11951-52, price \$3.00. (Part of set No. 324, containing the MacDowell *Second Piano Concerto*.)

IF we were to establish the so-called "star-system" in our reviews to denote the degree of excellence achieved, we would, in this case, unhesitatingly bestow "four stars" on the composition, the performers, and the performance. Less than such a rating would be akin to disparagement.

The music is of course, no great shakes; but, then, it was not meant to be. It is music for diversion, for play and banter. Ibert — who would have thought he had it in him? — turns out a veritable *tour de force* of healthy satire, blithe horseplay, and delightful prankishness. The entire *Divertissement* was obviously written with the composer's tongue in his cheek and, one may add parenthetically, with his thumb to his nose. It starts out seriously enough, but it immediately becomes evident that M. Ibert has something tantalizing up his sleeve: the caricature is soon disclosed. He twits all the accepted, orthodox dance forms: the waltz, the wedding march (Mendelssohn is veritably made to stand on his head!), the gallop (it sounds like a raid), and the dignified march.

I can think of several comparisons, but this type of rollicking business comes nearest to the pungent films by Rene Clair. Like his sophisticated compatriot, Ibert gives us a sardonic procession — with all the aspects or horseplay — of all the bourgeois sentiments. These may be sacred to this class of society, but our hero evinces little veneration for its sacrosanct dance forms. A Wedding March? Convert it into a bloated hang-over! A Waltz? Good after a hot bath! All the dances caper and groan under his scathing pen; they become misshapen and awry under the sarcastic fanfare of the wind instruments. We can almost visualize the French chorus girls come tripping out, kicking their spangled legs high in the air. Popular Gallic tunes are utilized to give the work an atmosphere of a French Minsky Burlesque. Indeed, the only serious interlude is the *Nocturne*, and even here the gravity is reduced to an absurd saccherine lyricism a la Debussy, a la Tchaikowsky, a la Wagner, a la Patee!

Like the sardonic music of Shostakovich, it is all intended to be in fun, but I cannot help feeling that Ibert really sought, in this

work, to be more than funny. Without dragging in the heavyweights of sociology, one would surmise that these orthodox dance forms — their intentions and associations — presented a perfect foil for mockery and derision; and who else but a man seeing the faults, the weaknesses of his middle-class society, would attempt to hold up this scene to good-natured ridicule? That he is so successful is perhaps due to his own feelings in the matter; for he is a member of this class, and his satire is meant to be not so much for criticism as for laughter. What he finds is funny and what he discloses is even funnier.

This work is heartily recommended, without reservations, to all those who suffer from *Weltschmerz*. If it does nothing else it will make you chuckle, and that alone, in these hectic days, is worth the price. Mr. Fiedler and his men are excellent, and the recording is of magnificent clarity.

The two discs are, incidentally, part of the Edward MacDowell set, the latter being reviewed by the editor in another section of this magazine. A word of praise, however, to Mr. Reed and Mr. Fiedler, the former suggesting that this delightful piece of music be recorded, and the latter recognizing the merit of the suggestion and recording it.

—W. K.

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LISZT: *A Faust Symphony, Three Character Pictures*; played by Grand Orchestre Philharmonique, direction Selmar Meyrowitz. Concluding chorus sung by d'Alexis Vlassorf Russian Choir with M. Villabella (Tenor solo). Columbia set M-272- seven discs, price \$10.50.

A SHORT review of this recording appeared in our June issue in an article by the present writer termed *A European Record Excursion*. The opinions expressed then having been sustained through several other hearings of the recording, we can do no better than repeat them in part here.

Liszt composed this work in 1853-54, and then revised it in 1857, at which time he added the final chorus, a superfluous section in our opinion, and one which because of its sentimental probity forms an anti-climatic ending to the work.

1936 having been the 125th anniversary of Liszt's birth (he was born on October 22nd, 1811), an effort was made to do honor to that event throughout the musical world. Among a number of contributions made by

the recording companies, in line with these celebrations, this seems to us to have been the most important. *A Faust Symphony*, founded on Goethe's famous poem, is a musical delineation of the three principal characters of the poem. The full title of the work is — *A Faust Symphony: in Three Character-Pictures* (after Goethe). The characters — Faust, Gretchen (or Marguerite), and Mephistopheles — are the subject of three movements. Although no program is given on the score, one nevertheless is associated with it which undoubtedly emanates from the composer.

The first movement marked *Faust* — "*I am he who seeks*" — is made up of four themes, which outline the character. The first of these presents him as a "type of humanity, harassed with doubt, rage, despair, loneliness." The second theme describes Faust's "strivings and hopes," the third — "his ideals and longings," and the fourth — "his pride and energy." This first movement, thematically intricate and unnecessarily involved, is somewhat protracted. The second movement marked *Gretchen* — "*I am she who loves*" — introduces at first "a melody obviously designed to give expression to the gentle grace of Gretchen's character; then a motive borrowed from the beginning of the first theme of the first movement suggests the entrance of Faust into the maiden's mind; it is followed by the extended melody, which delineates the feeling of love after it has taken complete possession of her soul." The use of the third theme from the first movement which follows (giving voice to Faust's longing) "shows the clarifying influence of association with the Gretchen music." This second movement is the most purely musical part of the symphony.

The last movement marked *Mephistopheles* — "*I am he who denies*" — is the virtuoso Liszt. It is ingenious in its dramatic elements and thematic effects (the composer here has purposely distorted the themes of the first section). This movement is made up of "mimicries and parodies of the themes of the first movement, especially the third (Faust's longings and ideals) which is made the special subject of the evil one's sport, because it enables him to get nearest to Gretchen, whose goodness protects her from his wiles." The movement is one of conflict, which "finds its solution in the epilogue sung by the male chorus and solo tenor, the text of which is the *Chorus mysticus* which ends Goethe's tragedy." This epilogue, a sort of an apotheosis, making use

of a tenor voice and a chorus, "extols the virtues of the eternal feminine."

Liszt has sought in this work to analyze and expound the feelings and the interests of the various characters, their relations to each other, etc., but in so doing he has hampered his symphony with a philosophical program, which is not always clear or convincing. The characters, so thoughtfully and so skillfully drawn by Goethe, are no more than externally outlined by Liszt. Yet, in this symphony, one cannot deny that Liszt has written some of his most sincere and deeply felt music. His was a heart divided, as the English critic, W. R. Anderson, has noted, "a mind knowing the tawdry and the true, but hankering after both, wanting cheap applause and yet having high aspirations." There is far more to appreciate in this work, however, than to condemn, and since it is most capably performed by Selmar Meyrowitz, it deserves both our attention and our applause. The recording here is good, without being outstanding. The work is recorded with considerable cuts, most of which it must be stated, are for the best.

—P. H. R.

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ROSSINI: *L'Italiana in Algeri* — Overture; played by the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York, direction of Arturo Toscanini. Victor disc, No. 14161, price \$2.00.

IT is surely fitting that Toscanini's latest musical legacy should contain at least one of the Rossini *overtures* of which he is so fond. For no other conductor of our time has equalled his fine Italian hand, or his skill at building a *crescendo* from a whisper to an overwhelming *forte*. His unusual dynamic range has been a feature (not universally admired) of his last series of records, and those who have enjoyed the tremendous gradations of the Wagner album will find the same qualities here. And for those who have not experienced them, it may be well to repeat the warning not to turn the volume up during the *pianissimo* with which the record starts, for the *fortissimo* to come is quite overwhelming. As before, there is a considerable wait at the beginning of the second side, due, we understand, to the Maestro's impatience with the prosaic matter of timing. This disc, which was released in England a couple of months ago, will be found in all save the music presented, equal to the Wagner and Beethoven recordings.

And, let us hasten to add, quite aside from the masterly performance, this music has a

charm of its own. The *Overture* is written in the old Italian style — formally it may be analyzed as a symphonic *allegro* movement. It has all the neatness and sparkle of the three-years-younger *Barber of Seville Overture*, though its tunes are easier to forget. It is easily the peer of *Cenerentola* or *La gazza ladra*.

L'Italiana in Algeri (not the *Italians*, as the label has it, but the *Italian woman in Algeria*) tells the story of one Isabella, who is detained in Algeria by pirates, but who succeeds in outwitting them. The opera was a favorite vehicle for Malibran, Pisaroni and Alboni, but has not fared well in recent years. It was produced at the Metropolitan in 1919, under the direction of Gennaro Papi, with Besanzoni, Hackett, Sundelius and Picco in the cast. It was not an overwhelming success. The singers of our times have not, like Toscanini, mastered the Rossini style.

—P. M.

* * * *

SAINT-SAENS: *Danse macabre*—Symphonic poem; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra, direction of Leopold Stokowski. Victor disc, No. 14162, price \$2.00.

THE *Danse macabre* was originally conceived as a song, set to a poem of Henri Cazalis and published in 1873. Whether or not Saint-Saens found the melody unsingable, as one distinguished critic gives us to understand, he expanded and remade it into a symphonic poem the following year. The theory is exploded from time to time by a performance of the original work, and for the curious, it can be found on a record originally made in England, in an effective rendering by Vladimir Rosing.

In any case, for better or for worse, the orchestral version has been with us long and often, and will probably remain for many years to come. It is amusing to witness the disagreement among the doctors on the *Danse macabre*. According to Arthur Hery in his book on Saint-Saens, it is "a work of striking originality, and one which has contributed in no small degree to popularize his name." On the other hand, says Watson Lyle, "it is concerned with a spectral waltz danced in a graveyard by skeletons, which behave in a thoroughly conventional manner by commencing their revels after the clock has struck the hour of midnight, and then decorously returning to their tombs at cock-crow. There is nothing at all original in the scoring, al-

though the composer has succeeded realistically in translating the grisly and unpleasant idea of the verses into terms of music . . . Probably the cheapness of the effects in this work is responsible for the light regard in which one sometimes finds the works of the master held by serious musicians who are probably only acquainted with his compositions of 'popular' genre."

Though neither the first nor the last work dealing with the underlying idea, it was sufficiently novel to draw forth these words from A. J. Goodrich, in 1889. "The *Danse macabre* of Saint-Saens is probably the most realistic piece of legitimate descriptive music ever written, and it is important that students should hear a performance of this opus, though they must be forewarned to expect nothing euphonious or beautiful. The subject, though once looked upon as a portentous and credited phenomenon, is, of course, too antinomious a matter to be considered otherwise than as a phantasm. It is, moreover, the very antithesis of whatever might properly be called beautiful. In short, it is a very ugly theme. But it inspired M. Saint-Saens in the creation of a remarkably weird and spectral composition, and one that would have done honor to the scientific skill of Spohr, and the abnormal imagination of Berlioz."

This disc naturally replaces Victor 6505, which has been in the catalogue since 1926. Be it said that the new version comes well up to expectations (though Stokowski has deposed the xylophone) and that the performance is full-blooded, sonorous and vital. That, and the fact of Victor's higher fidelity recording is, I take it, all the record buyer needs to know. —P. M.

* * * *

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *Music for the Ballet — Aurora's Wedding*; played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, direction Efrem Kurtz. Victor set M-326, three discs, price \$6.50.

THIS is a dancer's item. The popularity of the Monte Carlo Ballet Russe has prompted the recording of the music used for a number of their presentations. The music here is drawn from Tchaikowsky's ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*. The selections comprise *Overture, Polonaise, Adagio and Variation, Bluebird, The Three Ivans and Adagio, and Pas de Quatre and Mazurka*.

It is to be supposed that people who have seen the ballet will be reminded of the dancers through these records. The music is

not of great importance, "scraps from the workshop," as one reviewer has termed it. It helps make good theatre when dancers like those associated with the Ballet Russe are in evidence, but apart from the theatre it is weak stuff.

The recording is bright and colorful, but the playing is not very deft or inspired. The inclusion of this set in the higher priced red-seal category seems to us an imposition on the record buyer.

—P. G.

CONCERTOS

MacDOWELL: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor*; played by Jesus Maria Sanroma with the Boston "Pops" Orchestra, direction Arthur Fiedler. Victor set M-324, three records (with Ibert's *Divertissement* included in the same album). Price \$7.50 complete.

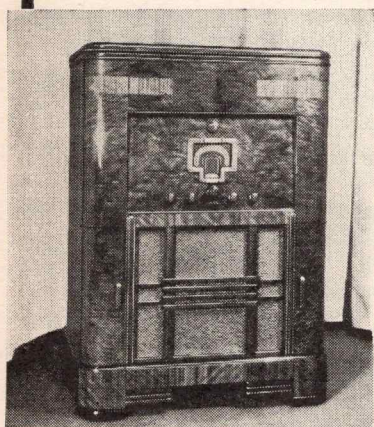
I WOULD be inclined to mark the MacDowell recording as a milestone in Victor's contributions to American music. Why one of MacDowell's major works was not recorded before this is incomprehensible, as this native composer has long been justly regarded as one of the greatest creative musicians that America has produced. The notes with this set make the assertion that he is "by far the greatest," but this is stretching a point. There is no question that he is great, and that his music compares favorably with much that was written in his time, both in Europe as well as this country, but such enthusiasm should not be permitted to stand as an unqualified statement.

Edward MacDowell was born on December 18th, 1861 — just seventy-five years ago — in New York City. In the forty-seven years of his earthly sojourn he went far in establishing himself as a pianist and a composer, and in helping to win universal respect for American musicians and for American music. MacDowell won his first laurels in Germany, where he studied with Raff and where he gained the friendship and esteem of Franz Liszt.

Despite the influence of certain European composers of the romantic school, MacDowell's music is still original and forceful enough to command respect. The solidity of this music, the fluency of the writing for the piano and the orchestra, and the expressive and deeply poetic thematic material stimulates our admiration. The work is frankly romantic because MacDowell was in rela-

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14161—Italians in Algiers
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Symphony Orchestra

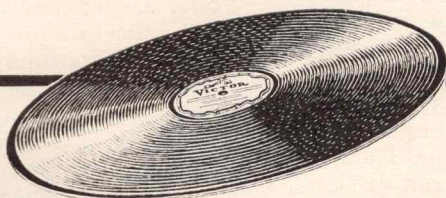
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tion to his times and content to express himself in the manner of the men of his day. He was no pioneer, innovator, or radical seeking to work out new devices, but a musician content to work in recognized forms with recognized materials — pouring his own inspiration into these moulds. He was an earnest and solid worker, and a gifted pianist.

Most people think of MacDowell as a salon composer, because they know only his sentimental *morceaux* for piano. The bigness of the man has been overlooked — one is tempted to say forgotten as evidenced for example in the resourceful *Eroica* and *Keltic Sonatas*, the tone-poems, the *Indian Suite* and the present concerto.

The *Second Concerto* dates from 1890. It was first produced in Boston under Gericke with the composer at the keyboard. With the opening surge of the music, we are made aware of a brilliant and forceful work. There is some similarity between the opening of this concerto and that of Grieg's, and an idiomatic and thematic relationship is evident throughout the work, particularly in the first movement. (There is also a stylistic relationship with the surging character of Rachmaninoff's concertos.) Although there is a suspicion of derivation, the material is much more vigorous, enough so to give to the composition MacDowell's own stamp. Too, MacDowell's themes are broader and more virile than Grieg's, and his piano is more definitely integrated with the orchestra. As in his sonatas, the mood is sustained with great intensity, and the thematic material is inter-related.

The Boston "Pops" this month are brilliantly represented on records. I would be inclined to mark this recording as one of the finest piano concertos extant. Despite the fact that Mr. Sanroma's name is reduced to an after-thought on the records, he remains the *star* of the performance, and it is he who transmits to us the impact of the music in a telling and forceful performance. Behind him and with him at all times is the orchestra under the superb direction of Arthur Fiedler. There is in this recording an evidence of team work such as we hear only too rarely on records. One is reminded of the recent partnership of Fischer and Barbirolli in the Mozart *E flat Concerto* and also that of Rachmaninoff and Stokowski in the Rachmaninoff *Second Concerto*.

A word about the hybrid companion in this album set, the first of the Boston "Pops", should be inserted here. The MacDowell and the Ibert compositions may seem strange bed fellows, but they should be considered in re-

lation to a concert hall program rather than to a record album. They form an interesting nucleus of a program by the celebrated Boston "Pops" in one's own home, and they only need the same orchestra's brilliant recording of Rimsky-Korsakow's *Capriccio Espagnole* or Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*, to make that program one of appropriate length.

This set should augur well for Mr. Fiedler and the Boston "Pops" in more album sets.

—P. H. R.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in A Minor*, No. 15, *Opus 132*; played by the Lener Quartet. Columbia Set No. 273, five discs, \$7.50.

A NEW recording of this splendid work has long been required. Somehow, the performance by the London String Quartet (listed in the Columbia catalogue until this while) — though generously studded with good qualities — was never remarkable for its brilliance or insight. The reading was, on the whole, fair, though leaning mainly on the side of dullness. Yet this magnificent piece of music deserved more reverence from its four interpreters. It is of course in many respects a very difficult work to play; not technically, for certainly *Opus 130* and *131* are more difficult, but the difficulties of this work are mainly *subjective*. It is the constant transition of mood, the upsurge of emotion, the delicate balances between feeling and contemplation that a quartet must translate into tone, and to keep one heightened emotion constantly before us, that of prayerfulness.

The history of its composition is the chronicle of its subject-matter. The work was composed by Beethoven in the spring of 1823, after a long siege of illness. The manuscript bears the following words — written in the master's scrawling hand: *Heiliger Dankgesang an die Gottheit eines Genesenen, in der Lydischen Tonart* ("Song of Thanksgiving to the Deity on recovery from an illness, written in the Lydian mode"). It was this circumstance, together with the actual fact of Beethoven's ill-health at the time, that led Herr Marx, the eminent German musicologist, to discover in this quartet the "musical expression of illness and recovery." "The scene of the entire work is laid in an atmosphere of suffering; the music is restless, morbid, and nervous: creating effects that the sinewy, wailing tone of the stringed instruments is

peculiarly fitted to express." This observation excites Marliave, the author of *Beethoven's Quartets*, into a tantrum. "This quotation from Marx," he says, "typifies the mentality that insists on finding for every musical work an appropriate 'programme'. (Marliave forgets that it is Beethoven himself who, in his dedication, gives us the 'appropriate programme'.) This assertion makes Beethoven responsible not only for a continuous imaginative 'programme' of this type, but for descriptive realism and even imitative harmonic effects Admittedly, Beethoven was a composer of 'programme' music, but always in its highest and psychological sense. In this respect, the XVth quartet only translates through the medium of sound the artist's permanent habit of spiritual thought, like all the last works: the struggle against destiny, and the triumph of happiness over sorrow. It is only a coincidence that the composition of the Opus 132 stretched over a period in which health for a time overcame disease."

It is, in my opinion, too easy to dismiss the substance of such an important work as a coincidence. We know for a fact that Beethoven required a positive psychological impetus in order to create a major work: a work that was, moreover, tied up with the inner workings of his being. The fact that he was so gravely ill had an effect on his psychic apparatus; the fact that he eventually recovered from this illness left another effect. The concrescence of these effects naturally created a particular set of emotions within him and unconsciously he sought to describe his feelings, his various psychic states in the one language of which he was a master: music. This description need not have a 'programme'; it need not delineate fits and fevers as if on a chart; it need not give us pictures of the pathological or the morbid. (Since when is ill-health pathological and the recovery thereof morbid.) But it will touch the core of the man's suffering, his fear, and eventually, his recovery. Would it be abusing critical license—as Marx seems to have done — to say that, somewhere between the beginning and the end, lies the secret of an important work, particularly a work that had grown out of a major physical and psychic disorder? At any rate, we will no doubt find it difficult to fit a phrase into a thermometer. But this we cannot deny: the whole substance of the work: its obscuration, its lovely sentiment of reverence, its prayerfulness, these are not "coincidences" — but definite outgrowths from a serious reality, in which the supreme artist had converted them not into tonal jeremiads, nor into philoso-

phical laments, but into a lyric of ineffable thankfulness.

The Leners have long been associated with the recording of Beethoven's quartets. They are a foursome of excellent musicians and superb performers; but, like everything they do, they have a tendency to over-refine what they play. With Beethoven this ultra-polish does not carry. The steel of the music has its own glow. The playing is of course reverential, virile in part, and full of sensitive feeling, but this tendency to make gorgeous what is frequently rugged, to beautify by imposition when the beauty lies in the rough, uncut phrase may be considered (paradoxical as it sounds!) beauteous blemishes.

But such blemishes are the least to worry about. When all is said and done, the recording is well worth owning.

—W. K.

PIANO

BALAKIREW: *Islamey, Oriental fantasia*; played by Simon Barer. Victor disc, No. 14028, price \$2.00.

THOUGH Balakirew was the leading spirit of the Russian group of "five", and an active composer, few of his works have survived to our day. It is further surprising that the best known work of this great nationalist is not more typically Russian. And after the colorful works of Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakoff, the orientalism of *Islamey* seems mild indeed, though the work is based on three genuine Georgian themes. Balakirew wrote *Islamey* after a trip to Caucasus, in 1868, and dedicated it to Nicholas Rubinstein, brother of Anton and himself a noted pianist.

Islamey is nothing if not a brilliant work, though there are sufficient contrasts in it to save it from being purely display music. At first it was considered unplayable, but as piano technique grew up to it, it gradually found its place in the repertoire. In style, the piece recalls Chopin and Liszt, and is at the same time prophetic of Scriabin and even the very Spanish Albeniz. Alexander Siloti has dubbed the work *The dance of the Dervishes*, presumably because of the agitated beginning, and its rhythmic resemblance to Beethoven's *Dervish chorus*, but that is only a part of the composition. There is a lovely soothing middle section, and a fine building up for the return of the original mood.

In 1908 the Italian composer, Alfredo Casella, arranged the *fantasie* for orchestra, and in that form it has had considerable success. The first recording of the work was in the Casella version, and formed part of the Victor Hollywood Bowl album. As a piano solo it has been recorded by Claudio Arrau for Polydor, and by Cyril Smith for HMV. Barer's record is the newest, and presents a particularly brilliant and musicianly performance.

The pianist, who at his New York debut on November 9th of this year, is said to have "introduced himself in dazzling fashion," was born in Odessa, in 1896. As a boy he won the Rubinstein Prize at the Leningrad Conservatory, and has for years been known on the continent as an artist of the first rank. His records have been notable among piano reproductions for clarity and power.

—P. M.

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DEBUSSY: *La Cathédrale Engloutie*; played by Walter Gieseking. Ten-inch Columbia disc, 17077-D, price \$1.00.

PERHAPS none of Debussy's Preludes for piano is as well known as *The Engulfed Cathedral*, and most of us like its old flavor, based as it is harmonically on medieval organum, with melodies like Gregorian chants.

In our day Gieseking is admittedly the unrivalled player of Debussy, because he has an imagination and a delicacy and adeptness in pianistic tone coloring exactly suited to Debussy's music. His piano almost ceases to be a percussion instrument. He applies a flick of color just as a Monet could with his brush place a point of light on a canvas. Again he makes the whole piano awaken to vibrate and sing sonorously with the diffused but penetrating quality of the organ. He evokes an aura that gives an intangible aliveness to such of Debussy's creations as this one.

In his book, *French Piano Music*, Alfred Cortot gives this brief program for the prelude: "An old Breton tale goes that once in a while in the clear morning light, when the sea is transparent, the Cathedral of Ys, sleeping its enchanted sleep under the waves, rises from the depths of the ocean and of antique time. The bells chime slowly, we hear the priests solemnly intoning, and the illusion sinks again below the indolent sea."

—A. P. D.

HARPSICHORD

BACH: *Toccato in D Major*; *Fantasia in G Minor*; *Fugue in C Major*; played by Yella Pessl, harpsichord. Columbia Set X-70, two discs, price \$3.00.

THE three items which Miss Yella Pessl has recorded this month are welcome additions to the increasing store of Bach's music on discs. I must confess that I was singularly pleased to note that Miss Pessl played these works with more regard for dynamics than she has played in some of the other works recorded. Her sameness of tone, her "loudness" — due to her heavy touch — spoiled whatever pleasure I sought to derive from her selections. But, happily, this set eradicates any such displeasure.

The *Toccato in D Major* is a product of Bach's early years. (Personally, I would have preferred to hear it on the piano.) It is a large work in proportions, full of resounding passages, brilliant bravura, and the slow movements typical of Bach's contemplation.

The *Fantasia in G Minor* is a more matured affair, again revealing the best characteristics of Miss Pessl's playing. The *Fugue in C Major* is from the *Twelve Little Preludes and Fugues* (six preludes of which were recorded last month by Wanda Landowska, harpsichordist, for Victor).

Miss Pessl plays all the three works with care and sensitive musicianship.

Again, we say, a worthy addition to Bach's music on records.

—W. K.

VIOLIN

STRAVINSKY: *Danse russe* (from *Petroushka*); played by Samuel Dushkin, violin, and Igor Stravinsky, piano; and *Pastorale*; played by Samuel Dushkin, violin; Gromer, oboe; Durand, English horn; Vacellier, clarinet, and Grandmaison, bassoon. Columbia 10-inch disc, No. 17075-D, price \$1.00.

THOUGH we may take the recent activities of Stravinsky, in transcribing his earlier works for violin and piano, to mean a decline in his powers, or simply a tribute to his friend Samuel Dushkin, the composer's right to rehash his own works will certainly not be questioned. And whatever may be our point of view in regard to transcriptions generally, it behooves us at least to listen with

respect. When the complete biography of Stravinsky is written, these pieces will represent a phase in his development—or decline, as the case may be. Therefore, let us thank Columbia for bringing them to us.

I do not intend to imply that the composer is anything short of a master of the violin idiom (with, perhaps, the help of Dushkin) or that the transformation of the *Danse russe* from *Petrouchka* has not been successful. The only question is whether anything new has been added to the literature of music — whether, granted that we can hear this dance played either on the violin or by the full orchestra, we would for a moment hesitate. Of course we have all suffered through a large part of the violinists' repertoire of encores and tid-bits, and should be grateful for any addition above the usual level. I, for one, am grateful, but still prefer my *Petrouchka* straight.

The *Pastorale* is something else. Written as a *vocalise*, or song without words, with accompanying oboe, English horn, clarinet and bassoon, it was published in 1929, and so represents comparatively recent Stravinsky. Simply transferring the vocal part to the violin is hardly what is properly called transcription, and Dushkin's silky tone has just the qualities one would require in a singer of this music. The title is an adequate description of the music. For a brief moment we are carried far into the country, and can imagine ourselves, perhaps, lying on our backs in some lonely field. Stravinsky has maintained a superb balance between the instruments, and the interweaving of the parts is a delight.

The *Pastorale* is not new to the Columbia catalogue, but the Szigeti record (7304-M) was made with piano accompaniment. Since instrumental color is one of the features of this music — not to mention the fact that this new release was made under the direction of the composer — Dushkin certainly has the advantage. The recording is over two years old, but it will stand comparison with the newest.

—P. M.

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WARLOCK: *Capriol Suite*: (a) *Basse danse*; (b) *Pavane*; (c) *Mattachins*; (arr. by Szigeti); played by Joseph Szigeti, violin; piano accompaniment by Nikita Magaloff. Columbia 10-inch disc, No. 17074-D, price \$1.00.

IT is amusing that this record should come to me after what I have written about

the suite of *Gervaise* dances simultaneously released by Victor. It is, of course, pure coincidence that they should both appear this month, and if I had not been forced by the other into a discussion of the *Capriol suite*, there would be little apparent connection between them. For these "double transcriptions" of Szigeti take on a very different flavor than that of the string orchestra.

Peter Warlock (whose real name was Philip Heseltine) published his *Capriol suite* in 1926, in the familiar arrangement for strings. In 1928 he made it over for full orchestra, but this version was never as successful as the first. For his material, as most of us know, he drew on the tunes included in the *Orchésographie* of Thoinot Arbeau (whose real name was Jean Tabourot), an invaluable old book on the dance, published in 1588. Nevertheless, as Cecil Gray points out, the suite is considerably more than an arrangement of old dances. The composer has simply used Tabourot as a starting point, and has let his own imagination play freely upon the tunes. One of the numbers, the ravishingly beautiful *Pieds-en-l'air*, is, in fact, a completely original composition. The name of the suite is also taken from Tabourot, who wrote his book in the form of a dialogue between himself (Arbeau) and a certain lawyer named Capriol, who had found it necessary to his profession to learn to dance.

It cannot be denied that the three dances which Szigeti has transcribed make effective violin music. On the other hand it must be said that something of the smoothness and grace of the string orchestra setting is lost in this arrangement. This is particularly true of the *Pavane*, which, as I have hinted before, I consider one of the choicest of melodies. This charming movement was originally sung as well as danced, and has a delightfully archaic text beginning "Belle qui tiens ma vie captive dans tes yeux." Szigeti takes it a bit slowly, losing, I feel, something of the impersonality of the dance. It also suffers from being broken in the middle.

The recording, which was released in England within the last few months, was apparently made there, as the balance between the violin and piano is particularly well achieved. The piano part is clear and solid without ever being intrusive. It need hardly be said that Szigeti and Magaloff play the music well.

—P. M.

OPERA

GILBERT and SULLIVAN: *The Mikado* or *The Town of Titipu*, Comic Opera in two acts; sung by the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company with Isidore Godfrey as conductor. Complete on 11 discs — Victor set C-26, price \$16.50.

THE popularity of Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas in a sophisticated and mechanistically accelerated age proves conclusively that rhythm and melody are still paramount to the well-being of a greater number of people. Apparently the comedy, although definitely dated, still appeals, and the music, to those who like it, is still fresh and vital. We have only to cite the sold-out houses of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in cosmopolitan New York in the past two years to prove that the operettas are immensely popular. Of course, the main reason for their appeal is the fact that they are satires founded on situations that historically are *not* dated, for such events as Gilbert and Sullivan burlesque in their scores are largely duplicated as time goes on. The locale of the scene is hypothetical — for the story might happen almost anywhere. Perhaps a hundred years from now these operettas will still be given and as widely applauded for their cleverness; perhaps, who knows, someone may then even attempt to *modernize* them and thereby satirize the satires of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan!

The Mikado is Japanese in theory only, for the music is no more oriental than that of Puccini's *Mme. Butterfly*; and it is doubtful whether some of the antics which go on in it would ever have been condoned in Japan. But this is beside the point. The wide popularity of this score needs no justification nor amplification here. It just *is*.

A re-recording of *The Mikado* has long been badly needed. Of all the Gilbert and Sullivan scores that have been recorded in the past, this was the poorest from a reproduction standpoint, due to the fact that it was made in 1927 at a time when electrical recording was still largely experimental.

The new version is excellently recorded, and the balance between the voices and the orchestra (apparently augmented) is about equitable. The latest set is also sung on the whole better, but here the praise must be curtailed. Somehow the spirit of the stage performance, such as we have had in New York both in this and last seasons, is missing.

This seems curious because the singers in the present recording have been closely identified with the D'Oyly Carte production for some time. One wonders whether a lack of audience, the cold impersonal *mike*, the atmosphere of a recording studio or an empty theatre (such as it was), may not have had their effects upon the singers. Humor can be conveyed in song, but an expression, a gesture, can make it much more vital. Anyway, the humor of this performance is not contagious nor really very much in evidence. The diction of the men is much better than that of the women; but again we'll point out this may be due to the microphone. Men do fare better, and when three women sing together the problem may very well be tripled.

The cast includes Darrell Fancourt as The Mikado; Derek Oldham as Nanki-Po; Martyn Green as Ko-Ko; Sydney Granville as Pooh-Bah; Leslie Rands as Pish-Tush; Brenda Bennett as Yum-Yum; Marjorie Eyre as Pitti-Sing, and Josephine Curtis as Katisha.

Fancourt is justly famous as the Mikado. His characterization lives on records as truly as it does in the theatre. And Oldham is an ideal Nanki-Po — the perfect English gentleman in a Japanese kimono. An English reviewer says he "succeeds in giving the impression that at least one heir to the throne of Japan was educated at Eton and Oxford." The balance of the men sing well but fail to make their characterizations emerge from the record. Miss Bennett has charm and so have her companions, even though they are not too precise with the King's English. Miss Curtis' Katisha, on the other hand, does not seem to be a particularly well worked-out characterization. The chorus is fine, and the orchestra under Mr. Godfrey's direction, is splendid. If the music of *The Mikado* remains the main thing with anyone who likes it, I doubt whether that person will find any fault with the present set for the performance is well sung and played.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

MOZART: *The Marriage of Figaro*, Opera in four acts; sung in Italian by the Glyndebourne Festival Opera Company under the direction of Fritz Busch. Victor albums M-313, M314, M-315 (17 discs), price \$34.

A COMPLETE Mozart opera on records has been wanting for a long time. I imagine the reason that it was not previously brought forward was partly owing to the fact that the companies believed an all-star cast essential to the success of such an endeavor. The choice

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of *The Marriage of Figaro* was a particularly happy one as a first Mozartean opera on records because it is one of the most gracious scores of its kind ever written and a veritable melodic joy from beginning to end.

Mozart, who had an especial genius for characterization in music, has perhaps nowhere made his characters live with greater fidelity than in his wholly charming opera—*The Marriage of Figaro*. It has often been said that the words and music here are perfectly mated — an assertion which none will deny after examining the score. Da Ponte who fashioned the libretto for Mozart from Beaumarchais' sensational play of the same name, tells in his *Mémoires* that while he wrote the words Mozart composed the music and that the whole thing was completed in six weeks. This statement however has been disapproved, for, as a fact, Mozart really worked from November, 1785 to March, 1786 on this opera. Spontaneity and precision, the true formula for a masterpiece, nevertheless prevailed, since Mozart did very little rewriting.

The completed opera was first presented in the Spring of 1786 in Vienna, where it

was accorded a triumphant reception, incredible, "without precedent," as one writer states, "and without future." The opera house was packed and "so many of the arias were repeated that the length of the performance was almost doubled." It is interesting to realize that *The Marriage of Figaro* is therefore practically the oldest opera still included in the repertoire of our times, and is only eclipsed by Mozart's *Elopement from the Seraglio* which dates from 1782.

The present recording was issued originally in three sections, as a Society issue in England, about a year ago. Why it was deemed essential to restrict such a recording to a Society issue is one of those mysteries I will never understand. With music lovers clamoring for a complete Mozart opera on records and then to issue one in a restricted edition would seem to me a particularly narrow — or short viewed — gesture. Considering too that this is no all-star cast, the extra expense involved in a Society issue is an imposition on people's purses. I am delighted to find that Victor has brought forward this recording in a domestic release and accordingly reduced the ridiculously high price of the Society issue.

The present recording was made by an English provincial opera company in 1934. The Glyndebourne Festival Opera Company is the particular hobby of a rich Englishman. It is an artistic endeavor, a brilliant social affair; and because of the limited size of the opera house (which holds about 300 people) the price of the tickets is very high. The recorded performance is not an all-star one, in fact one would be inclined to term it a non-star performance. This, however, is no disparagement for the singers complement each other and unite in conveying the spirit of the work in a most creditable manner. The ensemble work is particularly fine, and is the best part of the whole thing in my estimation. Credit for this fact belongs, of course, to the conductor — Fritz Busch. In fact, Busch's splendid direction can be noted throughout, and is unquestionably the motivating factor for the precision and vivacity of the performance.

The manner in which the opera is recorded is a most confusing one. For example, volume one (six discs) contains concerted sections from all four acts; volume two (six discs) contains the overture and arias and duets from acts 1 and 2; and volume three (five discs) contains arias and duets from acts 3 and 4. This is the manner in which the records were originally released in England. In repressing for domestic distribution, Victor has not remedied this condition, probably due to restrictions imposed upon them in regard to the breaking up of Society issues. It seems a pity, however, that this could not have been remedied and the whole thing put into order for many reasons.

The cast, headed by Roy Henderson as the Count, Aulikki Rautawaara as the Countess, Audrey Mildmay as Susanna, Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender as Figaro, and Luise Helletsgruber as Cherubino, are, as previously intimated, competent. In my estimation, the most successfully sung roles are Susanna's, Figaro's and the Count's. Rautawaara as the Countess and Helletsgruber as Cherubino lack assurance. Their work is uneven. Mildmay is a charming Susanna. Her performance is good without, however, being inspired. Domgraf-Fassbaender, an admirable Figaro, is by far the best of the whole troupe, even though his singing is somewhat uneven. None of the singers is of Italian origin, as anyone who speaks the language will quickly ascertain. The modern manner of singing Mozart without *appoggiaturas* is adapted in

this performance, (a procedure upon which the writer could discourse at great length).

It remains for me to speak of the recording and the excellent booklets, prepared by Walter Legge, which accompany the various sets. On the whole an equitable balance and a good clarity has been obtained in the recording. There has been no over-amplification nor undue distortions. If precision is lacking at times, it can be accredited to the fact that a set-up in an empty opera house offers its definite problems. Fortunately, there are no reverberating distortions. Mr. Legge's booklets supply the history of the opera, its story and admirable translations of same in part.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

SAINT-SAENS: *Samson et Dalila*, Chanson de la Meule; sung by Georges Thill, with chorus and orchestra conducted by Philippe Gaubert. Columbia disc, 9121-M, price \$1.50.

FINDING a Thill record in the batch for the month's reviewing arouses an expectation that a hearing always justifies. This *Samson* aria proves as successful as a phonograph excerpt as when performed as a scene of the opera at the opera house.

At the beginning of Act III Samson is turning the millstone in the prison at Gaza. He is alone, chained, blind, and with shorn hair. A chorus of captive Hebrews is off-stage. The prophet in abject misery admits his weakness and sins, and offers himself, wreck that he knows himself to be, as an instrument for carrying out God's will. The chorus bewails his broken vow. Again he voices his despair, and implores forgiveness. The chorus reminds him that he had been chosen to restore them to their fatherland. Then, as the chorus continues to jeer at him for having sold his power for a woman, thereby making them all slaves, Samson's true magnanimity is shown by his shouldering of the entire guilt; he prays to be allowed to give his life in expiation, and begs God to withdraw his anger against Israel. Contrite, he blesses the Lord's justice, and he sues for the comfort and freedom of his fellow-captives.

Thill sings this profoundly moving scene with fervor, with assured and virile tone, and with a complete absence of affectation. These are the same tributes that his records invariably command. The orchestra and chorus give a balanced support. Thill's recording is again technically excellent.

—A. P. D.

VERDI: *Rigoletto*, opera in four acts. Sung in Italian by Riccardo Stracciari (Rigoletto); Dino Borgioli (Duke of Mantua); Mercedes Capsir (Gilda), with artists, chorus and orchestra of the La Scala Theatre, Milan, Italy, under the direction of Cav. Lorenzo Molajoli. Columbia Operatic Set No. 18, fifteen discs, price \$22.50.

RIGOLETTO is marked by critics as the starting point of the second stage of Verdi's artistic development. This work and the two which immediately followed it — *Il Trovatore* and *La Traviata*—brought Verdi great popularity throughout Europe and established him at the head of the Italian school of opera. *Rigoletto* was produced in 1851, when Verdi was fifty-eight.

The "new romanticism" of Victor Hugo, which the literary world of the 1840's was praising, naturally offered a composer rich material for operatic exploitation. In 1844, Verdi had Hugo's *Hernani* arranged into a libretto. The success of the opera he created on this story undoubtedly prompted him to decide later also to make an opera out of Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*. The play dealt with the frailties of Francis I, which Verdi was however, forbidden to exploit in Italy for fear of royal disfavor. Originally Verdi wanted to call the opera *La Maledizione* (The Curse), but a friend, who was instrumental in making him alter the locale of the story into a petty Italian state and the King into an inconsequential ruler, suggested he call the opera after the main character. The opera, which Verdi wrote in forty days, made an instant hit, and the melody of the Duke's aria, *La donna è mobile* became overnight a popular piece for whistlers as well as singers.

The story is told that Verdi did not let anyone see this aria until the day before the final rehearsal, not even the tenor, and that when he gave him the aria on that day he made him swear not to divulge a note of it before the initial performance.

Rigoletto owes its success to Verdi's gift for melody. The libretto is at best a clumsy affair, but even to this day the story does not detract from its success. It is an opera with three important parts, for it must be admitted the roles of Rigoletto, the Duke, and Gilda offer many fine opportunities to great vocalists. Naturally the baritone dominates because he is given the hero's part, but de-

spite this fact great tenors and sopranos favor the roles of the Duke and Gilda.

Considering the popularity of *Rigoletto*, it is surprising that this recording was never issued in this country previously. It was made at least six years ago in Italy, and was recognized immediately as the only desirable recording of the opera.

Despite the age of the recording, the balance between the voices and the orchestra, and the quality of the whole thing is unusually fine. And since the part of Rigoletto is splendidly sung by Stracciari, regardless of the fact that he was beyond his prime when he sang this recording, it is doubtful whether anyone will soon displace his performance.

His associates are perhaps less imposing, but nonetheless good. Capsir, for example as Gilda, possesses a vocal quality which is particularly suitable to the part. When she does not force her voice, and whiten and harden its timbre, the quality is fresh and lovely, and her pitch is absolute. As Gilda she is far more successful, that is via records, than she is as Violetta. Dino Borgioli as the Duke is appropriately carefree and impassioned as the occasion demands. And the balance of the singers are better than one encounters ordinarily in Italian opera houses. Molajoli at the orchestral helm again proves himself a capable director, and the chorus acquit themselves with honors.

—P. H. R.

* * * *

WAGNER: *Lohengrin*, *Elsa's Traum*; and *Tannhäuser*, *Dich, teure Hallé*, sung by Kirsten Flagstad, with orchestra conducted by Hans Lange. Victor disc, No. 14181, price \$2.00.

THIS record should invite all the reviewer's encomiums, and yet it does not have that indefinable something that always makes enthusiastic praise so spontaneous. We have not yet heard on any Flagstad record that quality that grips us when she sings at the opera house and which we had never consciously attributed to an unusual personal magnetism of the artist. Can it be that this peerless voice and careful musicianship lacks a phonograph personality, and requires the trappings and the spaces of the stage to release this singer's temperament? If this is so, our loss is great. But we shall continue hoping that later records will capture that elusive appeal, let us say "bloom", that now seems wanting.

The voice is beautiful throughout these two arias, particularly in the fullness of the middle voice. *The Dream* is quietly sung, but without that complete repose and detachment that the singer has so often and so easily shown. We cannot say that she is slighting an occasional phrase, but a wondering doubt just will not be downed, try as we may to overlook it. The *Tannhäuser Greeting*, when well sung, is always exhilarating music, but here it seems over-excited and even rushed. Perhaps the recording is too brilliant, but the voice does not surge out and ride over the full orchestra in its wonted opulence.

It is quite possible that if heard on a first class large, modern machine in a very big room, these records might succeed in reconstructing the atmosphere of the stage, and thus invalidate this one listener's own criticism. But if so special a setting is necessary to hear it at its best, will not a great many record buyers be automatically excluded from the complete enjoyment of this disc?

—A. P. D.

VOCAL

HAYDN: *The Creation, The Heavens are Telling and Achieved is the Glorious Work.* Sung by the Royal Choral Society, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Organ, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. Victor disc 11960, price \$1.50.

SOME months ago we found several of the *Messiah* choruses the finest choral records we had ever heard, and these two *Creation* selections, made at the same time and by the same artists, are in every respect just as admirable.

These choruses of joy and praise, commemorating the creation of the physical universe and the advent of all living creatures and man, are an outpouring of religious exultation. The Royal Choral Society demonstrates its amazing vitality, its assurance, and its exceptional alertness in rhythm. The evenly matched choirs have a vigorous and unforced tone. There is an unabating "lift" and precision in the singing and in the playing of the orchestra for which Malcolm Sargent's conducting must be responsible. Triumphant music is here triumphantly performed and reproduced.

—A. P. D.

STRAUSS: *Traum durch die Dämmerung*; and *Morgen*; sung by Enid Szanthy, with orchestra conducted by Alexander Smalens. Ten-inch Victor, 1791, price \$1.00.

ENID SZANTHO, the Hungarian contralto, made a great impression when she sang last season with the New York Philharmonic Symphony, and this disc shows us the reasons why. The voice is deep, firm, dark, and charged with emotional utterance. Szanthy successfully and with surety projects her own very definite conceptions of her songs. We feel that here is a new singer of temperament, one able to arouse us to enthusiasm in music that is essentially dramatic.

Both *Traum durch die Dämmerung* and *Morgen* are mood songs. The former, in its words, is a song for a man, not a woman. "Over spreading meadows, at dusk, I am irresistibly drawn by a soft velvety hand to meet the most beautiful woman in a bower of jasmine. I do not hasten to go to this lover's land, nor shall I hasten to leave it, in the twilight blue of the evening." Strauss does not mark many directions for the singer, but his *crescendo* leading to the sudden *pianissimo* on "schönsten Frau" Mme. Szanthy does not observe. Yet we feel she has given a moving interpretation of the song.

John Henry Mackay's poem and Strauss' setting of *Morgen* are both elusive. "Tomorrow the sun will shine again. On the path I shall tread I shall meet my beloved, and thenceforth we shall be completely united in a never-ending love. Together we shall go slowly through life, oblivious to everything except the joy and bliss of our soul-pervading love." Mme. Szanthy sings a trifle hastily. She makes it a personal love-song, which she might perhaps argue it to be, but which, however, we believe to be more of a mystical rapture, a losing of the self in a dream of the spirit. We have heard a few singers treat it in this way, notably Claire Dux and Frieda Hempel; they sang as if in a trance, with ethereal caressing and haunting tones that gave an impression of an experience divorced from time, especially as they voiced the words, "und auf uns sinkt des Glückes stummes Schweigen." Mme. Szanthy's more vibrant voice sounds well against the harp, strings, horns, and solo violin of Strauss' orchestration.

The recording of both songs is excellent.

—A. P. D.

TSCHAIKOWSKY: *In der Kirche*; and *The Volga Song* (Tradition); sung by Don Cossack Choir, conducted by Serge Jaroff. Columbia disc, 7333-M, price \$1.50.

THIS record shows clearly the orchestral tonal effects and methods of the famous Don Cossack Choir. The voices, at Serge Jaroff's beckoning, assume almost any instrumental color, and the leader constantly plays one color against another. The recording captures their lightest *pianissimi*, and their thundering *fortissimi*, and again and again shows their uncanny command of *crescendi* and *diminuendi*. By one technical device or another every phrase is given an interest that compels attention. No one could accuse these men of under-interpretation.

In der Kirche is labelled a Cossack lullaby, but this must be a mistake. The words are deeply religious and patriotic: "Kneeling before Thee, O Lord, we admit Thy right to punish us. Because of our guilt our country is being chastised. Forgive us; renew our hope, so that our spirit and power can arise from our abasement. Save and protect our beloved Russia." These words are coupled to one of the pianoforte pieces of Tschai-kowsky's *Album for Children* (Op. 39, No. 24).

The Volga Song is a sturdy traditional song arranged by Jaroff. It is not the familiar *Volga Boat Song*.

—A. P. D.

* * * *

Un Violon dans la Nuit, and *Vieni, Vieni*; sung by Tino Rossi, with orchestra. Ten-inch Columbia disc, 4145-M, price \$1.00.

TINO ROSSI remains in his element in these two songs. *Un Violon* is the better of the two. The singer asks the muted violin to sing of the joys of love, and to conjure up the whispered tendernesses of that dream night of the past. Such a memory will now sweeten the pain that the deserting lover has left behind her. All this makes a smooth vocal tango, to which Marcel Cariven's Orchestra lends a light accompaniment.

Removed from its setting in the Casino de Paris revue the words of *Vieni, Vieni* are meaningless. Verses in French alternate with a patter Italian song. The recording where a chorus joins the tenor is noisy and distorted on the reviewer's copy of the record.

—A. P. D.

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LIGHT ORCHESTRAL

BIRCH, MONTAGUE: *Intermezzo Pizzicato*, and DE LA RIVIERE, T.: *Crocus Time*, played by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, 10 inch Columbia disc, No. 264-M, price \$1.00.

THESE two little concert morceaux are certainly close kin. Both have a disarming and undeniable charm. Both are built on conventional harmonies and rely for their effect on neatness of conception and execution, vivacious rhythms, and the tang of the pizzicato strings. Montague Birch, Sir Dan Godfrey's assistant, leads the strings of the Bournemouth Orchestra for his own composition. Sir Dan Godfrey conducts for *Crocus Time*, where woodwinds and 'cello sing against the plucked accompaniment.

These numbers will be welcome new material for dancing schools, for hotel and radio orchestras. The recording is just as pat as the music.

—A. P. D.

FRIENDS OF RECORDED MUSIC

MOZART: *String Quartet in E flat*, K. 171; played by the Kreiner Quartet (Shulman, Lerner, Kreiner and Shulman). The Friends of Recorded Music discs Nos. 3 and 4. \$1.50 each to members.

THE choice of Mozart's little known early *Quartet in E flat* (K. 171) as their second contribution to recorded literature is a fortunate one on the part of *The Friends of Recorded Music*. While not one of the master's most ponderable contributions in its sphere, it nonetheless contains some characteristic utterances and is in every way worth recording. Especially remarkable is the presence in the opening *adagio* section of the germ of both Tamino's "Bildnis" aria and subsequent parts of his music from *Zauberflöte*.

Perhaps the finest movement is the wistful, contemplative *andante*. But both the *menuetto* and final *allegro assai* are charming, typical expressions of his genius in a gayer vein. The Kreiner Quartet sets forth the work with stylistic veracity and agreeable tonal texture and the discs are from the mechanical aspect quite remarkable.

—Jerome D. Bohm.

GUITAR

LUIS MILAN: *Pavana*; L. de NARBAEZ: *Theme and Variations*; and G. SANZ: *Capricho* (Guitar solos); played by Julio Martinez Oyanguren. Columbia disc No. 17076D, 10-inch, price \$1.00.

OYANGUREN is acknowledged by Spaniards to be one of the greatest artists on the guitar. "In his hands," they say, "the guitar sings, laughs, moans and cries . . . in fact, it runs the whole gamut of human emotions, etc."

Although the present pieces do not show Oyanguren running a gamut of emotions, they do testify to his skill as a guitarist, his ability to color expressively this type of music, and to his unusual technical accomplishments.

When we think of the guitar, we naturally think of Segovia who in recent years awakened new interest in this instrument. Comparison with Segovia's recordings show Oyanguren also to be a proficient artist.

In his first recording for Columbia, Oyanguren has wisely chosen music written especially for the guitar rather than transcriptions. The pieces he plays are not without charm, although it cannot be said that they are of great musical import. Of chief interest are the *morceaux* by Milan and de Narbaez, 17th century composers for the guitar.

In the Columbia South American list, there is another Oyanguren recording (No. 5474X) which better exhibits his technical accomplishments. The selections on this recording are two of the guitarist's own compositions — *Arabia*, a dance in the oriental manner, and *Andalucia*, a dance making use of traditional Spanish rhythms.

The recording of these various pieces has been excellently realized by Columbia. As a matter of fact, Oyanguren emerges on records to much better advantage than his compatriot, Segovia.

—P. G.

The Record Collector's Corner

More About Fernando de Lucia

By JULIAN MORTON MOSES

THE following is a communication which I have received from the editor of *Collector's Corner* in *The Gramophone*:

December 11, 1936.

Dear Mr. Moses:

Will you allow me to offer a few comments upon your remarks concerning the records of Fernando de Lucia, and the letters in *The American Music Lover* which followed them?

Firstly, may I venture to query your statement that *Phonotype* and *Fonotipia* were not the same concern? Like The Gramophone Company, the parent *Fonotipia* Company, operating from Milan, had a branch in Paris, issuing records by many world celebrities, (Maurel, Litvinne, Capoul, among many others), and bearing the label *Société Française de Phonotypie* — Paris, and underneath in smaller letters, *Società Italiana di Fonotipia* — Milano.

Secondly, de Lucia positively recorded for this company in 1904, making Neapolitan songs with piano accompaniments; and later he made a far larger number with orchestral accompaniments. I cannot suggest any reason why the French form of the company's name should have been used in a Naples branch — always assuming that it was the same concern — but it would be strange to have two *Phonotype* Companies — and de Lucia recording for both.

I must refer to the letter from Mr. L. Dick of New York, in which he declares his belief that the verdict in favor of de Lucia's "*Phonotype*" records as against his G&T would be at the rate of 100 to 1. I must assume that Mr. Dick is reasonably familiar with the earlier G&Ts, as these are the only ones which faithfully reproduce the finer points of de Lucia's particularly stylish singing. All these were sung in the original keys, and it is evident from them that the singer's unique powers were still intact. Frankly, I have not had an opportunity of hearing any operatic selections on "*Phonotype*" — an obvious disadvantage in a discussion of this kind — but of the orchestrally accompanied songs it is safe to say that they made, as arranged, no demands upon an upper register that no longer existed. From this it follows, and I have authority for saying it, that such operatic music as he sang from 1910 onwards, (and probably earlier), was transposed to a lower key, though his artistry remained — naturally.

As he never recorded in America, it is likely that American collectors are quite unfamiliar with de Lucia's early G&Ts: but should it happen that Mr. Dick has been unfavorably impressed by any of these, may I say that it is possible to overlook the necessity for carefully adjusting the turntable speed to not higher than 74 revolutions. Whereas

in the case of the 1904 *Ecco ridente* the speed is something over 80; and played thus, I consider this to be de Lucia's masterpiece, the *coloratura* passages being intact as written.

I hope you will forgive me for "butting in" to your Corner in this way, but, as Mr. Dick has truly said, anything concerning de Lucia is certain to arouse controversy!

Yours sincerely,

P. G. HURST.

At the outset, let me assure Mr. Hurst that far from regarding his comments as "butting in", I am honored that one whose activities were the fountain-head of record collecting and whose every article is couched in English prose of striking beauty should take this much notice of my seemingly contentious column. But I must disagree with him.

Phonotype and *Fonotipia* have only two things in common, a like sounding name and de Lucia. Even the latter they do not completely share as de Lucia's work for *Fonotipia* was entirely in his native genre though he may have recorded for them as early as 1904. (His name, however, is not included among announcements of this date — perhaps the records were put on sale later.) On the other hand, *Phonotype* is an entirely different concern with headquarters still located in Naples and not elsewhere. For them, de Lucia made a group of over two hundred selections which far overshadow in number, variety and, I believe, voice and artistry, his earlier contribution to the glory of G&T, great as that may have been.

America was fortunate in having repressed, almost immediately upon their recording, several of his earliest G&T records, among which were the following:

Manon, *Sogno*: G&T 52416 - Monarch 5025 - Victor 91020.

Rigolëtto, *La Donna e Mobile*: G&T 52411 - Monarch 5026 - Victor 91021.

L'Idéale (Tosti): G&T 52410 - Monarch 5027 - Victor 91022.

Tosca, *Recondita Armonia*: G&T 52414 - Monarch 5028 - Victor 91023.

We are thus in a position to judge his vocal capacity at a date nearer to his prime. In all sincerity, therefore, I must insist, as does Mr. Dick and all others who own a substantial number of his *Phonotype* records, that on many of them, de Lucia reveals a command of vocal resources, both as to range and flexibility and on all of them a tonal opulence far beyond anything his other records achieve. Whether this is because of restraint from other activity or more felicitous cooperation on the part of the company I am not prepared to say.

Certainly it is a fact that the *Phonotype* records themselves are as noisy as can be and bear the most freakish orchestral accompaniments imaginable. Moreover, they are not all of equal standard, some obviously being the product of de Lucia's off-days (I do not think he ever lost his top notes but rather, as in the case of all singers, the ability to command them at will). But when he is in "good voice", and that is a far greater part of the time, he soars the heights both in range and power with a much lesser use of falsetto than on G&T surfaces. Thus, he takes a clear forceful B flat without portamento in *Cielo e mar* from *La Gioconda* and a high C with the greatest of ease in the duet *Dillo ancor* from *Gli Ugonotti* (sung with De Angelis), though he omits it from the double face *Che gelida manina* from *La Bohème* and the usual interpolated B flat from *Come un bel di di Maggio* from *Andrea Chenier*. The two latter recordings are in reality poor examples of his artistry, even though they be in demand.

Yet all of these selections comprise a small part of what remains the foremost reason for the superior importance of de Lucia's *Phonotype* records, namely, the fact that his rendition of so many great arias and concerti can be heard under this label only. In addition to the selections above and those I mentioned in my original article (August issue of *The American Music Lover*) I might cite the following as indicative:

Elisir d' Amore, *Una furtiva lagrima* (both a single 12-inch and a double face 10¾-inch) — *Manon Lescaut*, *Donna non vidi mai* and *Tra voi belle* — *Ernani*, *Come rugiada* — *Puritani*, *A te o cara* and *Nel mirati* and also *vieni fra queste braccia* — *Barber of Seville*, complete opera — *Rigoletto*, almost complete opera (including an especially fine *Ella mi fu rapita* and *Parmi veder le largime*).

EDITORIAL

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Other outstanding releases through the year, listed as they came, would include the following:

Prokofieff: *Violin Concerto*.

Bartok: *String Quartets No. 1 and 2*.

Bach: *Brandenburg Concertos* played by the Busch Chamber Orchestra.

Brahms: *First Symphony* (Stokowski's re-recording).

Brahms: *Piano Concerto No. 2* (Schnabel and B. B. C. Orchestra).

Wagner: *Die Walküre* — Act 1.

Sibelius: *Violin Concerto*.

Sibelius: *Night Ride and Sunrise* (Tone-poem).

Claudio Muzio's Memorial Operatic Album.

Gluck: *Orpheus*.

Mozart: *Piano Concerto in E flat* (Fischer and Barbirolli).

Bach: *Organ Album* (Schweitzer).

Verdi: *Falstaff*.

Debussy: *Song Recital* (Maggie Teyte).

Schubert: *Death and the Maiden Quartet* (Roth String Quartet).

Landowska's First Bach Album.

A word should be said about the increase in chamber music recordings that have appeared during this past year. This is most gratifying for it shows a distinct development in the musical taste of the record buying public.

"An end of the so-called Jazz-age and a definite improvement in America's musical taste," was recently predicted by Dr. Frank Black, general music director of the National Broadcasting Company, as a result of a 45 per cent increase during 1936 in classical music programs over the previous year.

There is no question that radio is going more and more "classical", but the air-waves are still cluttered up with a lot of musical dishwashing that could be advantageously further curtailed. Radio, however, is not primarily a musical purveyor, despite the fact that it can bring us the best. It is primarily a medium (world-wide in its scope) for the dissemination of information. When the year is summarized and full cognizance taken of the major events of radio — it is not the musical programs that are remembered but

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In the Popular Vein

By HORACE "VAN" NORMAN

BALLROOM DANCE

AAAA—*Now*, and *Little Old Lady*, from *The Show Is On*. Ray Noble and His Orchestra. Victor 25448.

Vernon Duke's *Now* is an attractive, musicianly little ditty, quite in line with the really superior work that this talented composer has been turning out for the last several years. Noble finds himself thoroughly at home in this sort of number and continues the fine work he began with the *Born to Dance* tunes last month. If this really means a comeback on the part of Noble, it will be the best imaginable news, for the record business will always stand in need of the talents of a man like Noble, when he's in stride. *Little Old Lady*, which is an enormously "cute" number, in the most reprehensible sense of the word, turns out incredibly to be the work of Stanley Adams and Hoagy Carmichael.

* * * *

AAAA—*You're Too Good to be True*, and *Rainbow On the River*. Lud Gluskin and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7779.

Here is Gluskin in typical vein, with a sparkle and zest in his arrangements that are sadly lacking in the work of so many of his more highly publicized confreres. Indeed, one of the major mysteries of the music game at present is the apparent inability of Gluskin to establish himself with the commercial bigwigs, when it is perfectly obvious that a very large part of the listening public is craving for the sort of quasi-Continental fare that he has been serving, with little fanfare, for several years.

* * * *

AAAA—*Goodnight My Love*, and *Take Another Guess*. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25461.

Both sides of this disc are almost entirely notable through the fact that they are adorned by the vocal choruses of Miss Ella Fitzgerald, who is by the way of becoming the finest female vocalist in America. It is a little bit difficult to say just why Miss Fitzgerald's work is so supremely effective, since she achieves her effects by such subtle methods. Unlike almost any other vocalist that you can think of, she understates rather than overstates. Her work is characterized invariably by the most cunningly original phrasing imaginable, and an exceptionally appealing quality of voice gives her work a haunting quality that is strikingly individual. One understands that contractual complications may cause the imminent withdrawal of this grand record, so no time is to be lost in obtaining it.

AAA—*I'm In a Dancing Mood*, and *Someone to Care for Me*. Russ Morgan and his Orchestra. Brunswick 7777.

I'm In a Dancing Mood, an Al Goodhart tune written for the English production *This'll Make You Whistle*, looks like a natural and this record would be a natural too were it not for Morgan's occasional trombone interjections which add a rather morbid touch to what should be a completely gay business. Aside from Morgan's doleful wails on the sliphorn, which sound like some vague denizen of the barnyard in distress, it is a very bright piece of work and should be pleasing to his growing body of admirers.

* * * *

AAA—*With Plenty of Money and You*, and *Let's Put Our Heads Together*. George Hamilton directing Veloz and Yolanda Dancing Music. Victor 25449.

So solid and substantial a success has Shep Fields been that a host of imitators have already sprung up and George Hamilton, who is one of them, is undoubtedly the best. In fact, we infinitely prefer the imitation to the original in this case, since Hamilton's work seems far superior to Fields' in our mind. Fortunately, Hamilton doesn't reduce Fields' formula tricks of arrangement to absurdity, as was done on a competing concern's recording, as a gag, recently. He is definitely pleasurable to listen to — in small doses, anyway, and the first-rate *Gold Diggers* tunes by Harry Warren here recorded are right up his particular alley. One hopes for his sake, incidentally, that he simplifies the present unwieldy label designation of the band's name.

* * * *

AAA—*There's Something in the Air*, and *Where the Lazy River Goes By*, from *Banjo On My Knee*. Ray Noble and his Orchestra. Victor 25459.

More Grade "A" Noble, and the fairly complimentary things written about his other disc go for this one too. The Jimmy McHugh *There's Something In the Air* seems a likely tune and Noble handles it with simple effectiveness.

* * * *

AA—*Down In the Depths*, from *Red, Hot and Blue*, and *What a Dummy Love Has Made of Me*, from *The Show Is On*. Ruby Newman and his Orchestra. Victor 25470.

Down In the Depths is Cole Porter's way of rewriting those tear-jerking classics of the Gay Nineties, *I'm All Alone In a Palace of Stone*, and *I'm Just a Bird in a Gilded Cage*. It's another of those phony melancholic bits, written in the slow, some-

what bolero-like rhythm, that seems to be Porter's most typical idiom of late and might possibly turn out to be a real big hit if it weren't so much like *I've Got You Under My Skin* and, more strikingly, *Night and Day*. Newman handles it nicely enough, although the vocal is rather ineffectual after Ethel Merman, and reveals quite curious French pronunciation. The reverse is currently removed from the score of *The Show Is On*, so its fate on records is problematical.

* * * *

AA—*You Were There*, and *The Family Album*, from *Tonight at 8:30*. The New Mayfair Orchestra. Victor 25438.

Rather stilted performances, in too typical English style, of two tunes from the Current Noel Coward playlets. It's a pity no really good version of *You Were There* is available, since it is a song with large possibilities for popular consumption, but they'll not be realized on the strength of this recording, I fear.

* * * *

AA—*Love and Learn*, and *Seal It With a Kiss*, from *The Girl of Paris*. Eddy Duchin and his Orchestra. Victor 25472.

Somewhat disappointing tunes by Arthur Schwartz from a forthcoming film, these represent, I believe, for the first time in his song-writing career, a collaboration with another than Howard Dietz, in this case Eddie Heyman. Duchin is just Duchin here, which seems to be enough for his public, even though it comes a long way from satisfying you or me.

HOT JAZZ

AAAA—*Tiger Rag*, and *Whispering*. Benny Goodman Quartet. Victor 25481

This item will definitely send the swingsters into a perfect dither of excitement and with very good reason, for *Tiger Rag* is one of the most downright devastating things that has ever emanated from Benny and his buddies. Lionel Hampton, newest swing idol and a vibraphone-playing fool if there ever was one, is not featured as conspicuously on this as on other discs by the same group, but Goodman has never, to my knowledge, been heard to as good advantage and Krupa's drumming is of the sort that brings what are known as salvos of applause from the open-mouthed, goggle-eyed disciples of Le Swing who currently gather together each evening at the Mad-hattan Room to worship at the shrine of High Priest Benny.

* * * *

AAAA—*After You've Gone*, by Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra, and *Bugle Call Rag*, by Benny Goodman and his Orchestra. Victor 25467.

A very attractive disc, with our two premier white swing bands each taking a side and doing themselves proud in the process. Dorsey's work is a little too often not distinguishable from Goodman's (or is it the other way around?) but mostly he is strictly himself, and especially when blowing his hot but sweet trombone, while The Goodman is, as always, perfectly swell.

AAA—*Swingin' Them Jingle Bells*, and *A Thousand Dreams of You*. "Fats" Waller and his Rhythm. Victor 25483.

Fatso, the fleshly, was never more hilarious than in this version of *Jingle Bells*, with falsetto chirpings and exhortations plus, of course, his own inimitable keyboard antics. That Fats is the most thoroughly refreshing personality in the music game today (beside being a darned good musician) is too obvious to require elaboration and we have him here at his most infectious.

EDITORIAL

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the important news broadcasts — the current historical events. The re-election of President Roosevelt, the abdication of King Edward VIII and the Spanish War were tied for first place in a vote recently taken for the twelve most important broadcasts of 1936. When the switch is turned off on a musical program via radio, one has nothing left but a memory — a memory which quickly disperses itself like the enlarging circles in a pool once the object that formed them has disappeared. A concert hall performance and a recorded music one offers us more enduring memories.

* * * *

The Friends of Recorded Music are planning to record on January 5th two compositions by Charles T. Griffes, the American composer, and some songs by the Austrian composer, Joseph Marx.

An Indian Sketch for string quartet, founded on a Chippewa *Indian Farewell Song*, will be played by the Kreiner String Quartet. It will take one side of a twelve inch disc. On the reverse face will be Griffes' famous setting of Fiona MacLeod's *The Lament of Ian the Proud*. This song, considered by many critics to be a milestone in American song literature, will be sung by the American tenor, William Hain, with Jerome T. Bohm as accompanist.

Paul Engel, the American baritone who has been justly acclaimed as a *lieder* singer of outstanding ability, will sing two of Joseph's Marx's latest songs (1936 publications) — *Lieder* and *In meiner Träume Heimat* from the song-cycle *Verklärtes Jahr*. Long compared with the *lieder* of Brahms, Wolf, Strauss and Franz, Marx's songs are highly esteemed by discriminating critics and singers. To date, only one of his songs has been made available on a record, that being the less noteworthy *Marienlied*. *The Friends of Recorded Music* therefore take more than unusual pride in presenting this disc.

Swing Music Notes

By ENZO ARCHETTI

Now that another holiday season has joined the many others as another pleasant memory we can again sit back to enjoy our music on the radio without fear of a *Silent Night* being bawled out at us or a silly version of *Jingle Bells* inflicted on our ears at each turn of a dial. But it *was* fun while it lasted.

The *Saturday Night Swing Club* on WABC was in top form during the month of December. The outstanding broadcast of the month, and, for that matter, the entire series, took place on the 12th when the broadcast was relayed by short wave to South America to help celebrate the Pan-American Peace Conference. For that broadcast a special announcer translated each announcement and Senor Ayalla, the Rudy Vallee of South America, directed the orchestra in his own arrangement of the *St. Louis Blues*. But the stars of this show were the Three T's — Charles and Jack Teagarden and Trumbauer. These three, with Caspar Reardon and his swing harp, plus a few members of the Berigan orchestra gave a grand rendition of *Junk Man*. Teddy Wilson was also there to do his bit — and a swell bit it was, too. Incidentally, Teddy was the only Negro artist on the program. This in itself was significant — for this important program he should have been chosen to represent the Negro in swing music. Those who have followed Teddy's career and have come to know and love his smooth, gentle swing will agree that no better *individual* artist could have been chosen.

For January, the *Saturday Night Swing Club* has several guest artists of note to present. On January 2nd, it will be Claude Hopkins and a sensational hot guitar player named Joe Sodia. Sodia is a comparatively newcomer in town. He is strictly a hot soloist — entirely different from the Kress-McDonough of Frank Victor style of guitar playing. Incidentally, he has made a few hot recordings.

The interest of people in any subject can usually be judged by the number of publications that the subject inspires. Considering that swing is a comparatively young shoot on the Tree of Music, it already has a great following all over the world and a number of magazines devoted to it. Besides three in the United States, there are no less than six in England, one in France, one in Denmark, and two in Argentina.

In addition to these there are, of course, many other magazines like *The Gramophone*, *Variety*, etc., which run special columns devoted to swing.

Some of the best news which has come to the swing record fan recently was that of the pressing of the foreign recordings of Stephane Grappelly and his Hot Four, with Django Reinhardt on guitar,

on domestic Decca. This sensational, very unorthodox group first recorded for French Ultraphone and their records caused such a furore in France that Levy's of London, immediately undertook to press them under their private Oriole label. From there they went to English Decca and then H. M. V. Their story is one of constant improvement and now their records are available domestically on Decca. *Avalon* and *Clouds* are on 2302; *Djangology* and *Ultrafox* on 23003; and *Lily Bell May June* and *Some of These Days* on 23004. Apparently, these are repressings from the original French Ultraphones but are not grouped as they were originally. In fact, the original backings are in all cases dropped. Evidently these represent the cream of the Ultraphone recordings. Incidentally, note that Decca placed these records in their special 23000 series at 75 cents each, rather than in their 35 cents series. Unfortunately, the surfaces on these records are not too good.

The recent first appearance of Andy Kirk's Band in New York is already showing results. Two new recordings: *Bearcat Shuffle* and *Lotta Sax Appeal* (Decca 1046) and *What Will I Tell My Heart* and *The Lady Who Swing the Band* (Decca 1085) show the excellent qualities of the band as a whole. *Corny Rhythm* and *Isabell* as piano solos by Mary Lou Williams, with bass, and drums, prove again that Mary Lou is top "man" in the band.

The holiday show at the Paramount in New York had for its featured stage presentation the famous Casa Loma Orchestra. It has few good individual swing men but as an orchestral unit it still is one of the best. For ensemble swinging it is yet unsurpassed by any orchestra except possibly Duke Ellington's.

New York's Swing Lane is in full swing again. At the Hickory House a group known as the Three T's hides the identity of some of the finest swingers in the business: Charles and Jack Teagarden, on trumpet and trombone respectively, Frankie Trumbauer on sax, Caspar Reardon on harp, Frank Froeba on piano, and Min Lybrook on bass. The first three are from Paul Whiteman's band. Whether this represents a definite break from the band is not yet known. Maybe this Hickory House outfit is a safety valve for the Three T's so that they can let loose some of the swing steam they weren't allowed to blow in Whiteman's band.

Red McKenzie now has his own place on Swing Lane. His outfit consists of Joe Marsala, clarinet; Marty Marsala, trumpet; Joe Bushkin, piano; Ray Biondi, violin; Marty Stuhlmaker, bass; Eddie Condon, guitar; and George Wettling, drums. And Red McKenzie.

Mike Riley and Ed Farley who were making the music go 'round and 'round so vigorously just about a year ago to a day have decided to go their separate ways. Mike Riley has formed a new group at the Caliente which is said to be screwier than the original Riley-Farley group. Ed Farley's plans are not yet known.

Radio Notes

BARLOW AND SINGERS IN NEW CBS SERIES

Music of the Theater, a brilliant new series of weekly programs featuring four eminent soloists and the concert orchestra directed by Howard Barlow, broadcast their inaugural concert over the WABC-Columbia network on Sunday, December 27, from 2:00 to 2:45 p. m., EST. The quartet of singers included Ruth Carhart, contralto; William Perry, tenor; Russell Door, baritone.

Music of the Theater will present each week outstanding excerpts, vocal, choral and orchestral, from favorite operettas, musical comedies and operas.

JESSICA DRAGONETTE VEHICLE TO BE FAMOUS OPERETTAS

Jessica Dragonette, well-known radio soprano, will bring a new series of musical love stories to the Columbia network microphone when her new series is inaugurated on Wednesday, January 13, from 9:30 to 10:00 p. m., EST. Al Goodman will direct the orchestra for this series, which is a new edition of the *Palmolive Beauty Box Theater*.

After ten years on the air, Miss Dragonette will have another opportunity, in this series, to display her ability as an actress.

The musical love stories will be based on the plots and scores of famous operettas distinguished for their powerful, romantic situations. The music most beloved by listeners and dramatized plots will make up the weekly half-hour series.

The first light opera prima donna on the air, Miss Dragonette was heard several times as a guest in the original Beauty Box series. After seven years in a straight concert program, Jessica declared she is delighted with the opportunity to "provide a greater variety of entertainment" for her legion of admirers. She is also happy in the fact that she will once more be heard on the Pacific Coast.

This series will mark the return of Al Goodman to the CBS airwaves following almost a year's vacation from Columbia.

GREATEST RADIO AUDIENCE HEARD DAVID WINDSOR

The greatest listening audience in the history of radio today heard David Windsor, or Prince Edward, on December 11th, deliver his radio message to the peoples of the British Empire during a broadcast from London that was heard in this country over the coast to coast facilities of both the Red and Blue Networks of the National Broadcasting Company.

There are 101 broadcasting station affiliated with the NBC networks and practically every one of them carried the former King's message. There are more than 22,000,000 homes in the United States alone equipped with radio receiving sets, according to NBC's statistical department. Because of the general interest in Windsor's abdication, a fair idea

of the size of his audience in America may be obtained from these figures.

Apparently the interest in Windsor's speech has not abated, for recordings made of it by several sound studios are being sold far and wide.

MARCIA DAVENPORT ENGAGED AS NBC OPERA COMMENTATOR

Marcia Davenport, expert writer on music and successful novelist, has been engaged as commentator for the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts this season. The programs are to be heard over the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company each Saturday afternoon throughout the opera season under the sponsorship of the Radio Corporation of America.

The matinee broadcast was inaugurated Thursday, December 24, with the performance of Humperdinck's fairy-tale opera, *Hansel and Gretel*, preceding by two days the launching of the regular Saturday series on December 26.

Mrs. Davenport will comment regularly on the music and the singers, and describe the costumes, and also draw a complete word picture of the scene.

Mrs. Davenport practically "grew up" with the opera. She was born in New York City in 1903, the daughter of Alma Gluck, celebrated opera singer who made her debut at the Metropolitan in November, 1909. Mrs. Davenport was six years old then and, for the next three or four years, she was around the opera house much of the time, becoming a sort of mascot of the back-stage crew and the singers. She has kept up her acquaintance with opera house people all of her life.

LUCILLE MANNERS TO CONCENTRATE ON RADIO

Lucille Manners, young NBC soprano, has withdrawn from the cast of *Frederika*, the Schubert operetta now in preparation for a Broadway opening, because of the extreme demands made on her time by her radio career. Miss Manners has just recently been signed as prima donna of the Cities Service concerts for the season of 1937.

Starting with the broadcast of Friday, February 5, Lucille Manners will be heard weekly with Rosario Bourdon's orchestra and the Revelers Quartet, at 8:00 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Red Network. The concerts, which have been recognized for several years as among the highest type musicales on the air, are the result of many weeks careful planning in advance.

EDWIN C. HILL TO CHANGE TIME

Beginning Sunday, January 3, the Real Silk program entitled *Edwin C. Hill, The Spectator*, will be heard each week at a new time, 9:45 to 10:45 p. m EST, over the NBC-Blue Network.

The program, featuring Hill as commentator on *News Behind the Headlines* and Harry Sosnik's orchestra, previously has been heard fifteen minutes later at 10:00 p. m., EST, over the same network.

NBC EXECUTIVE COMPLETES 18,000 MILE AIR TOUR OF LATIN AMERICA

Completing the last lap of an 18,000-mile airplane trip through South and Central America to arrange for a regular exchange of radio programs between the National Broadcasting Company and Latin American countries, John F. Royal, NBC vice-president in charge of programs, returned to New York on Sunday, December 20th.

Following his departure from New York on November 18, Royal visited all of the Latin American countries possessing broadcasting facilities. In these countries, he held a series of "good neighbor" radio conferences, interviewing presidents, ambassadors and radio officials.

Shortly before his departure, Royal announced that the National Broadcasting Company was entering South America to compete on an equal footing with the European broadcasting systems that have long dominated the scene there. One of the first steps taken under this new policy was NBC's complete coverage of the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace at Buenos Aires.

Royal flew from New York direct to Buenos Aires, where he stayed through the first week of the peace conference directing NBC's broadcasts of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's addresses in connection with the conference. From Buenos Aires, the NBC executive continued his air journey to the other Latin American republics.

In furtherance of its plans for an extensive exchange of programs, NBC is building special programs for broadcasting to South America six days a week, and is erecting a directional-beam antenna at Bound Brook, N. J., to improve the reception of its signal below the equator.

HEIDT'S "BRIGADIERS" TO BROADCAST ANOTHER YEAR OF CBS PROGRAMS

Horace Heidt and his talented troupe of instrumentalists and singers were signed to present another full year of weekly programs, beginning with their broadcast over a WABC-Columbia network Monday, December 28, from 8:00 to 8:30 p. m., EST. (Broadcast to the West 12:00 Midnight to 12:30 a. m., EST.)

Heidt's Brigadiers, originally organized nearly 15 years ago, started their CBS broadcasts May 2, 1933. Among the entertainers who will continue to be featured in addition to the orchestra and glee club are Lysbeth Hughes, singing harpist; Bob McCoy, baritone; Larry Cottone, vocalist; the King Sisters, girl harmony group; Alvino Rey, electric guitarist; Ernie Passoja, trombonist, and the Three Trumpeteers, led by Sidney Mear.

COLUMBIA'S AMERICAN SCHOOL OF THE AIR

Columbia's *American School of the Air*, heard from 2:15 to 2:45 p. m. daily, except Saturdays and Sundays over the Columbia Broadcasting's nationwide network, has been presenting some unique and highly interesting musical programs on Tuesdays this season. In this year's series of musical programs, Columbia has been performing music composed by famous men whom the world does not know as musicians — men who made their names outstanding in other fields of art. It is worthy of note that the script is brief in all these programs — presenting merely factual details — and that the music dominates. January's two broadcasts will present the following material:

THE AMERICAN RECORD COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION

Announces an

Auction Sheet of Rare Cut-out Recordings

made famous by celebrated artists of the acoustic era on discs and cylinders.

Among the artists included in this first list are De Lucia, Sarah Bernhardt, Selma Kurz, Maria Labia, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Campanari, Van Rooy, Bonci, Zenatello, etc.

Those interested in obtaining the auction list should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Association, care of

THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER 12 East 22nd St., New York City

Record Collectors desiring to dispose of rare cut-out recordings are invited to communicate with the Association.

THE RECORD COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

to

AMERICAN CELEBRITY DISCS 1902 — 1912

Caruso, De Reszke, Melba,
Nordica, Eames, etc.

by

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Price: One Dollar

CONCERT BUREAU

College of the City of New York
CONVENT AVENUE NEW YORK

January 12—Music from the magic opera *Undine* by E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822), famous German poet — the man upon whose life and stories Offenbach's opera *The Tales of Hoffmann* is based.

January 26—Robert Browning and Music. This program will present the two famous poems of Browning *The Toccata of Galuppi* and *The Abt Volger*. The music that inspired these two famous poems will be played and the poems read. The program includes the following:

1. Adagio and Giga . . . Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1784).
2. Aria from the opera *Il Filosofo* (Galuppi).
3. Overture *Hermano and Una* (Volger).
4. Finale from the Piano Concerto (Volger).

AL PEARCE AND GANG TO HEAD NEW FORD SERIES

A gay new comedy and musical half-hour series entitled *Watch the Fun Go By*, starring Al Pearce and His Gang and Larry Marsh's Orchestra, will be inaugurated with the broadcast over a nationwide WABC-Columbia network Tuesday, January 5th. Sponsored by the Ford Motor Company Dealers, the program will be heard from 9:00 to 9:30 p. m., EST. (Rebroadcast to the West from 12:00 Mid-night to 12:30 a m., EST).

Pearce, who has been in radio for seven years, was a success from the start. He discovered most of the comedy and song artists now in his group while touring towns and cities in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Utah, New Mexico, and British Columbia as well as in his native California.

COZZI, STOPAK AND BOND FEATURED IN NEW SERIES

The Stainless Show, a new series of musical presentations starring Mario Cozzi, operatic baritone, Ford Bond as commentator, and a musical ensemble under the direction of Josef Stopak, is being broadcast every Friday, from 7:15 to 7:30 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Blue Network.

Although an Italian by parentage and birth — being born in Florence, Italy — Mario Cozzi is an American citizen and an American trained singer. Prior to his concert debut in New York, and his subsequent tours of the country, Cozzi was secretary to Gatti-Casazza, formerly impresario of the Metropolitan Opera, a featured player in the films, and an operatic star at La Scala in Milan.

Josef Stopak, NBC concertmaster and conductor, is a true radio veteran, having been associated with Station WJZ since 1923, three years prior to the formation of the National Broadcasting Company. During the last six years Stopak, as an NBC staff artist, has been heard as violin soloist, concertmaster and musical director of many of the network's outstanding presentations.

Ford Bond, in addition to acting as master-of-ceremonies for The Stainless Show, also will offer a brief commentary on the romance of steel. Although known as a sports announcer, Bond earned his first money as a singer when he was thirteen years old. For several years he directed choirs and choruses, and was at one time director of studios, music and programs for a station in Louisville, Ky.

MUSIC APPRECIATION HOUR

After a two weeks vacation from the air, the NBC Music Appreciation Hour will return to the combined NBC-Red and NBC-Blue Networks on Friday,

January 8, to present the sixth concert in Series A and B from 2:00 to 3:00 p. m., EST. Series A will deal with the double-reed instruments. Dr. Walter Damrosch will conduct the NBC Symphony Orchestra in the *Scotch Idyl* from Saint-Saens' *Henry VIII*, a Beethoven *Minuet* and the second movement from Franck's *Symphony in D Minor*. Series B will consider *Fun in Music*. Dr. Damrosch has programmed the *Andante* from Haydn's *Surprise Symphony*, *Gentlemen With Long Ears*, and *Hens and Roosters* by Saint-Saens, Strauss' *Perpetual Motion*, *The White Knight* by Taylor, and *Golliwogg's Cake Walk* from Debussy's *The Children's Corner*, to demonstrate how composers have made good musical jokes.

OPERA STORIES DRAMATIZED

A new series of radio dramatizations, telling the stories of the great operas, began Wednesday, December 30, on the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company.

Little or none of the music of the opera will be used during the programs; which will be given over almost entirely to acquainting the radio audience with the tales, in English, of the operas given at the Metropolitan and other opera houses. A cast of NBC players will take all the roles in the dramatizations.

PIANO CAUSERIES

Maurice Dumesnil, French pianist, will present the fourth of his series of six piano "sauseries," devoted to Claude Debussy's twenty-four preludes, during his program on Thursday, January 7, at 2:45 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Blue Network. Dumesnil will play and comment on *Mists*, *La Puerta del Vino*, *The Terrace of the Moonlight Audiences* and *The Fairies Are Exquisite Dancers*. An intimate friend of Debussy during the latter part of the composer's life, Dumesnil possesses a number of Debussy's unpublished works, several of which he has presented over NBC networks.

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Dr. Serge Koussevitzky will conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra in one of its regular subscription concerts at Carnegie Hall, New York, on Thursday, January 7, broadcast from 8:45 to 9:30 p. m., EST, over the NBC-Blue Network. The first performance in New York of Alfredo Casella's revision of Clementi's *Symphony in D* will be given during the concert. Koussevitzky has programmed Foote's *Suite in E Major for String and Orchestra*, *Opus 63*, to open the broadcast.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

William Hymanson violist, and the Musical Art String Quartet will be featured in the third of a series of broadcasts of the Library of Congress Chamber Music Concerts on Wednesday, January 6, from 10:00 to 10:30 p.m., EST, over the NBC-Blue Network. Mozart's *Pintet for Two Violins and Strings* will be performed during the program from the Library of Congress Chamber Music Auditorium at Washington, D. C. Members of the quartet are Sasha Jacobson, first violinist; Paul Bernard, second violinist; Louis Kievman, violist, and Marie Romaet-Rosanoff, cellist. The program will be prepared under the supervision of Oliver Strunk, chief of the music Division of the Library. The broadcast series of four concerts is under the auspices of the Gertrude Clarke Whittall Foundation.

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Our first recording — Boccherini's **String Quartet in A Major, Opus 33, No. 6**, played by the Kreiner Quartet — was issued in November. The praise that has been accorded this issue is epitomized by a Canadian writer's review — "In my opinion the playing and recording are fully up to the standard of any chamber music records that have so far been produced by any company or ensemble of players, and I wish to congratulate you on your enterprise".

Our second recording — Mozart's **String Quartet in E flat, K-171**, also played by the Kreiner Quartet, has likewise received universal praise. See Mr. Bohm's review in this issue.

The following recordings are being prepared. They will be made available early in January:

F. R. M. Disc No. 5

An Indian Sketch, by Charles T. Griffes, played by the Kreiner Quartet.

The Lament of Ian the Proud, (song) Fiona MacLeod-Charles T. Griffes, sung by William Hain, tenor, with Jerome T. Bohm at the piano.

F. R. M. Disc No. 6

Three songs by Joseph Marx — sung by Paul Engel, baritone, with Mr. Bohm at the piano.

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F. R. M. Disc No. 7

Scriabin's Piano Sonata No. 4, played by Katherine Heyman.

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